

South African
Poetry and
Verse

E. H. Crouch



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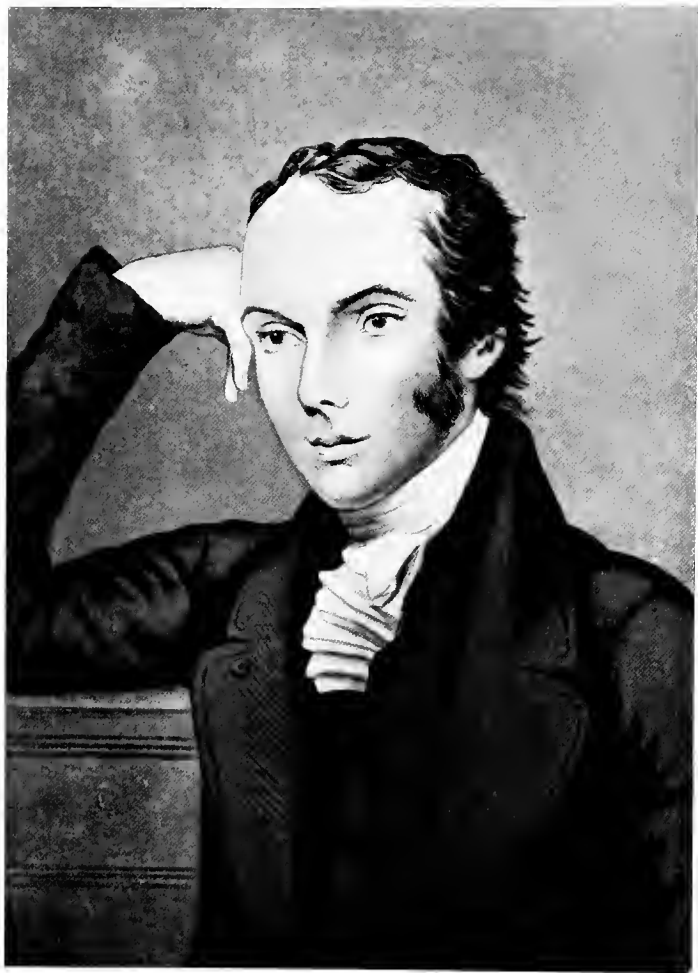


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**A Treasury of
South African Poetry
and Verse**



THOMAS PRINGLE

(BORN 1789; DIED 1834)

THE FATHER OF SOUTH AFRICAN POETRY

A Treasury of South African Poetry and Verse

Collected from various sources and arranged by

Edward Heath Crouch

Cambridge, South Africa

Second and Enlarged Edition

With Frontispiece

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A. C. Fifield, 44 Fleet Street, E.C.

1909

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TO MY WIFE,
WHOSE INTEREST, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND NICE CRITICAL
FACULTY HAVE HELPED ME NOT A LITTLE IN
COMPILING THIS SELECTION OF
SOUTH AFRICAN POEMS.

LA CROIX,
CAMBRIDGE,
CAPE COLONY,
1907.

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Introduction.

To make a selection of the best and most familiar poetry any country has produced is, I conceive, a desirable as well as pleasing object ; and to make a selection of the verse—in many cases very scattered—of a young country, which has hitherto produced no pre-eminently great poet, is, I think, not only desirable but essential. The present volume is therefore an attempt to collect and arrange such. The object has been to make a selection from a selection ; in short, to give, as far as material would allow, true and faithful specimens of the best which our poetical writers have hitherto given us. Such a selection—which, I trust, will merit the name of a “ Treasury ”—does, I hope, no injustice to the authors who have already published their poems in book form ; on the contrary, I hope that it may tend to popularize their works still more, by directing more attention to them, and thereby stimulating a desire to possess complete editions. It also fulfils the useful purpose of saving perhaps from oblivion some gem or worthy song which would otherwise lie forgotten in dry-as-dust pages of old Cape magazines or journals.

It is hoped that a selection like this will have the desirable effect of stimulating and fostering the too latent taste in the young colonial mind for the best in

poetry which his country has hitherto produced, or may ultimately produce.

Certain it is that no country should oftener pause in its ardent materialistic pursuits to find in poetry that relief and support in its strenuous life, than South Africa. We cannot be too often reminded of Matthew Arnold's assurance, that "more and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." That is a duty we owe to ourselves. True, South African poetry at present may not be able to satisfy this demand in its entirety. "The breath and finer spirit" are often wanting, but "the light that never was on land or sea"—the poet's dream—has been felt, and is striving for utterance. Whether the voice will be a lasting one depends largely upon the demand made by the people. They have, consciously or unconsciously, the destiny of the poetry of the future in their hands. Given sympathy, and a high standard demanded, the poet's lyre will respond; ignored, stifled—the result will be silence, possibly death, and the loss South African.

Then again, it is felt that there is a large and growing field of readers across the water, who, interested probably by ties of kinship, would welcome a volume of verse resonant of the voices and sentiments of those living under Southern skies. To them, such a selection as the present one may prove both interesting and valuable. It would be interesting by reason of reflecting what I might term the *local colour*, with all its brilliancy and uniqueness—those specially distinctive features of South African scenery, as shown in its grand and rugged mountains, boundless karoo, and

rolling veldt ; it would be valuable by reason of rescuing its native folk-lore and legend from oblivion, and weaving around them the glamour of song, as has been done in Australia by Adam Lindsay Gordon and Kendall, and in America by Longfellow and Bryant.

In compiling the present volume from a very scattered field of fugitive and other poetry—in some cases going back to the days of the British Settlers—the length of the poem has been one of the determining factors, and some poems have thus regretfully had to be omitted.¹ War poems, martial lays, and to a certain extent religious poems have also been largely excluded ; the former entirely so, on account of their diction or rougher form setting ill amongst the necessarily more musical lyric, and sonnet. The latter class (Religious Poems), however, possessing all the essential qualifications of devotional verse, has been relegated a place at the end of the volume.

Lest the word “Treasury” should to some appear suggestive of claiming a position for the volume analogous to that of Palgrave’s incomparable and unique selection, let me say at once such an idea surely could never be seriously entertained. To the literature glorifying a thousand years, “the idle singers of an empty day” here would be the first to do homage. Still, it is hoped and believed that in the fairer and more just comparison with the productions of such sister colonies as New Zealand, Australia, and even Canada, it will be found that relatively South Africa compares not unfavourably, despite the fact—a very vital one,

¹ Amongst others Mrs. Alice Mackay’s descriptive poem, “A Southern Shore,” and Mr. Beek’s delightful Drama.

too—that these colonies have (with the one exception) been favoured in possessing from their earliest history more uniformity of language, greater sympathy between the various sections of its peoples, and above all, fortunate in the experience of a calmer flow in their historic annals, which has rendered possible—nay, even fostered that mental and social condition, that finer spirit of harmony and feeling from which the loftiest song is always born.

E. H. CROUCH.

July 1907.

Preface to Second Edition.

THE hearty reception which the first edition of this work met with is proof—if proof were needed—of the desire of the South African colonist for an anthology of the poetical productions of his own country.

That 1000 copies should have been absorbed in a few months is gratifying alike to editor and authors. To the editor, as confirming his selection; to the authors, as indicative of an appreciation of quality and a growing desire for more.

That there will be in South Africa in the future an increased output of poetry now seems certain. The sum-total issued during the last decade has been more than quadruple that of a century previous, and the standard of merit has been considerably higher. Severe modern criticism demanded this higher standard, and the poet himself has striven for it. This, indeed, is essential if the songs of the South are to obtain a hearing, when the volume poured out from the North is so overwhelming.

This edition has been considerably enlarged, and the editor would again express the hope that it will prove the medium of or introduction to the study of the complete works of the authors who have so freely allowed the best to be culled from their productions. He has therefore more fully named the various sources which have been laid under contribution for this pot-pourri.

July 1908.

Note.

My hearty thanks are due to the authors whose full names appear in the Contents, for permission so readily and courteously granted to include some of their poems in this collection. Also to that pioneer in Cape anthology, the Hon. A. Wilmot, M.L.A. ; to Messrs. Juta & Co., T. Maskew Miller, Esson & Perkins, Thompson & Co., Macmillan & Co., T. Fisher Unwin, William Blackwood & Sons, Elliot Stock, Longmans, Green & Co., Sampson Low, Marston & Co., and Elkin Mathews, for permission to make use of scattered verse which has either appeared in periodicals or books published by them. There are others whose address is untraceable, by reason of their attaching their initials or a *nom de plume* to their compositions ; to all such I trust this acknowledgment of indebtedness will suffice.

E. H. C.

“ . . . O Africa ! long lost in night,
Upon the horizon gleams the light
Of breaking dawn. . . .
Thy name has been slave of the world,
But when thy banner is unfurl'd,
Triumphant Liberty shall wave
Its standard o'er foul slavery's grave ;
And earth—decaying earth—shall see
Her freest, fairest child in thee.”—*Thomson*.

A Treasury of South African Poetry & Verse

The Emigrant's Farewell.

“ OUR native land—our native vale—
A long and last adieu !
Farewell to bonny Teviotdale,
And Scotland's mountains blue !

“ Farewell, ye hills of glorious deeds,
And streams renowned in song ;
Farewell, ye blithesome braes and meads
Our hearts have loved so long.

“ Farewell, ye broomy elfin knowes,
Where thyme and harebells grow !
Farewell, ye hoary haunted howes,
O'erhung with birk and sloe.

“ The battle-mound, the Border-tower,
That Scotia's annals tell ;
The martyr's grave, the lovers' bower—
To each—to all—farewell !

“ Home of our hearts ! our fathers' home !
Land of the brave and free !
The sail is flapping on the foam
That bears us far from thee !

Thomas Pringle

“ We seek a wild and distant shore,
Beyond the Atlantic main ;
We leave thee to return no more,
Nor view thy cliffs again.

“ But may dishonour blight our fame,
And quench our household fires,
When we, or ours, forget thy name,
Green Island of our Sires.

“ Our native land—our native vale—
A long, a last adieu !
Farewell to bonny Teviotdale,
And Scotland’s mountains blue ! ”

Thomas Pringle.

Afar in the Desert.

AFAR in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side :
When the sorrows of life the soul o’ercast,
And, sick of the Present, I cling to the Past ;
When the eye is suffused with regretful tears,
From the fond recollections of former years ;
And shadows of things that have long since fled,
Flit over the brain, like the ghosts of the dead :
Bright visions of glory—that vanished too soon ;
Day-dreams—that departed ere manhood’s noon ;
Attachments—by fate or by falsehood reft ;
Companions of early days—lost or left ;

And my native land—whose magical name
Thrills to the heart like electric flame ;
The home of my childhood ; the haunts of my prime ;
All the passions and scenes of that rapturous time,
When the feelings were young and the world was new,
Like the fresh flowers of Eden unfolding to view ;
All—all now forsaken—forgotten—foregone !
And I, a lone exile remembered by none,
My high aims abandoned, my good acts undone,
Aweary of all that is under the sun,
With that sadness of heart which no stranger may scan,
I fly to the desert, afar from man.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side ;
When the wild turmoil of this wearisome life,
With its scenes of oppression, corruption, and strife,
The proud man's frown, and the base man's fear,
The scorner's laugh, and the sufferer's tear,
And malice, and meanness, and falsehood, and folly,
Dispose me to musing and dark melancholy ;
When my bosom is full, and my thoughts are high,
And my soul is sick with the bondsman's sigh—
Oh ! then there is freedom, and joy, and pride,
Afar in the desert alone to ride !
There is rapture to vault on the champing steed,
And to bound away with the eagle's speed,
With the death-fraught firelock in my hand—
The only law in the desert land.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side ;

Away, away from the dwellings of men,
By the wild deer's haunt, by the buffalo's glen ;
By valleys remote where the oribi plays,
Where the gnu, the gazelle, and the hartebeeste graze ;
And the kudu and eland unhunted recline
By the skirts of grey forests o'erhung with wild vine ;
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood ;
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will,
In the fen where the wild ass is drinking his fill.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side ;
O'er the brown Karoo, where the bleating cry
Of the springbok's fawn sounds plaintively ;
And the timorous quagga's shrill whistling neigh
Is heard by the fountain by twilight grey ;
Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,
With wild hoof scouring the desolate plain ;
And the fleet-footed ostrich over the waste,
Speeds like a horseman who travels in haste,
Hieing away to the home of her rest,
Where she and her mate have scooped their nest,
Far hid from the pitiless plunderer's view
In the pathless depths of the parched Karoo.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side ;
Away, away, in the wilderness vast,
Where the white man's foot hath never passed ;
And the quivered Coránna or Bechuán
Hath rarely crossed with his roving clan ;

A region of emptiness, howling and drear,
Which man hath abandoned from famine and fear ;
Which the snake and the lizard inhabit alone,
With the twilight bat from the yawning stone ;
Where grass, nor herb, nor shrub takes root,
Save poisonous thorns that pierce the foot ;
And the bitter-melon, for food and drink,
Is the pilgrim's fare, by the salt lake's brink ;
A region of drought, where no river glides,
Nor rippling brook with osiered sides ;
Where sedgy pool, nor bubbling fount,
Nor tree, nor cloud, nor misty mount,
Appears to refresh the aching eye ;
But the barren earth and the burning sky,
And the blank horizon, round and round,
Spreads, void of living sight and sound.
And here, while the night-winds round me sigh,
And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,
As I sit apart by the desert stone,
Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,
" A still small voice " comes through the wild
(Like a father consoling a fretful child),
Which banishes bitterness, wrath, and fear—
Saying, " MAN IS DISTANT, BUT GOD IS NEAR ! "

Thomas Pringle.

The Caffer.

Lo ! where he crouches by the Kloof's dark side,
Eyeing the farmer's lowing herds afar ;
Impatient watching till the evening star
Leads forth the twilight dim, that he may glide
Like panther to the prey. With freeborn pride
He scorns the herdsman, nor regards the scar
Of recent wound, but burnishes for war
His assegai and targe of buffalo hide.
He is a robber ? True ; it is a strife
Between the black-skinned bandit and the white.
A savage ? Yes ; though loth to aim at life,
Evil for evil fierce he doth requite.
A heathen ? Teach him, then, thy better creed,
Christian ! if thou deserv'st that name indeed.

Thomas Pringle.

The Coránna.¹

FAST by his wild resounding river
The listless Coran lingers ever ;
Still drives his heifers forth to feed,
Soothed by the Gorrah's humming reed ;
A rover still unchecked will range,
As humour calls, or seasons change ;
His tent of mats and leathern gear,
All packed upon the patient steer.
'Mid all his wanderings hating toil,
He never tills the stubborn soil ;
But on the milky dams relies,
And what spontaneous earth supplies.
Should some long parching droughts prevail,
And milk, and bulbs, and locusts fail,
He lays him down to sleep away,
In languid trance the weary day ;
Oft as he feels gaunt hunger's stound,
Still tightening famine's girdle round ;
Lulled by the sound of the Gareep,²
Beneath the willows murmuring deep ;
Till thunder-clouds surcharged with rain,
Pour verdure o'er the panting plain ;
And call the famished dreamer from his trance,
To feast on milk and game, and wake the moon-
light dance.

Thomas Pringle.

¹ An inland tribe mentioned by Livingstone and other African travellers.

² The Orange River.

The Bushman.

LET the proud white man boast his flocks,
And fields of foodful grain ;
My home is 'mid the mountain rocks,
The desert my domain.
I plant no herbs nor pleasant fruits,
I toil not for my cheer ;
The desert yields me juicy roots,
And herds of bounding deer.

The countless springboks are my flock,
Spread o'er the unbounded plain ;
The buffalo bendeth to my yoke,
The wild horse to my rein ;
My yoke is the quivering assegai,
My rein the tough bow string ;
My bridle curb a slender barb—
Yet it quells the forest king.

The crested adder honoureth me,
And yields at my command
His poison-bag, like the honey-bee,
When I seize him on the sand.
Yea, even the wasting locust-swarm,
Which mighty nations dread,
To me nor terror brings, nor harm—
For I make of them my bread.

Thus I am Lord of the desert Land,
 And I will not leave my bounds,
 To crouch beneath the Christian's hand,
 And kennel with his hounds :
 To be a hound and watch the flocks,
 For the cruel white man's gain—
 No ! the brown serpent of the rocks
 His den doth yet retain ;
 And none who there his stings provoke
 Shall find his poison vain.

Thomas Pringle.

The Incantation.

HALF-WAY up Indoda¹ climbing,
 Hangs the wizard forest old,
 From whose shade is heard the chiming
 Of a streamlet clear and cold :
 With a mournful sound it gushes
 From its cavern in the steep ;
 Then at once its wailing hushes
 In a lakelet dark and deep.

Standing by the dark-blue water,
 Robed in panther's speckled hide,
 Who is she ? Jaluhsa's daughter,
 Bold Makanna's widowed bride.

¹ The Man Mountain, so named by natives by reason of its supposed resemblance to the human figure.

Thomas Pringle

Stern she stands, her left hand clasping
By the arm her wondering child ;
He, her shaggy mantle grasping,
Gazes up with aspect wild.

Thrice in the soft fount of nursing
With sharp steel she pierced a vein,—
Thrice the white oppressor cursing,
While the blood gushed forth amain,—
Wide upon the dark-blue water,
Sprinkling thrice the crimson tide,—
Spoke Jaluhsa's high-souled daughter,
Bold Makanna's widowed bride.

“ Thus unto the Demon's River
Blood instead of milk I fling :
Hear, Uhlanga—great Life-giver !
Hear, Toguh—Avenging King !
Thus the mother's feelings tender
In my breast I stifle now :
Thus I summon you to render
Vengeance for the Widow's vow !

“ Who shall be the Chief's avenger ?
Who the Champion of the Land ?
Boy ! the pale Son of the Stranger
Is devoted to *thy* hand.
He who wields the bolt of thunder
Witnesses thy Mother's vow !
He who rends the rocks asunder
To the task shall train thee now !

“ When thy arm grows strong for battle,
 Thou shalt sound Makanna’s cry,
 Till ten thousand shields shall rattle
 To war-club and assegai :
 Then, when like hail-storm in harvest
 On the foe sweeps thy career,
 Shall Uhlanga, whom thou servest,
 Make them stubble to thy spear ! ”

Thomas Pringle.

Makanna’s Gathering.

WAKE ! Amakosa,¹ wake !
 And arm yourselves for war,
 As coming winds the forest shake,
 I hear a sound from far :
 It is not thunder in the sky,
 Nor lion’s roar upon the hill,
 But the voice of Him who sits on high,
 And bids me speak His will !

He bids me call you forth,
 Bold sons of Kahabee,
 To sweep the white men from the earth,
 And drive them to the sea :

¹ A warlike Kaffir tribe.

Thomas Pringle

The sea which heaved them up at first,
For Amakosa's curse and bane,
Howls for the progeny she nurst,
To swallow them again.

Hark ! 'tis Uhlanga's voice
From Debe's mountain caves !
He calls you now to make your choice—
To conquer or be slaves :
To meet proud Amanglezi's guns,
And fight like warriors nobly born :
Or, like Umlao's feeble sons,¹
Become the freeman's scorn.

Then come ye chieftains bold,
With war plumes waving high ;
Come, every warrior, young and old,
With club and assegai.
Remember how the spoiler's host
Did through our land like locusts range !
Your herds, your wives, your comrades lost—
Remember—and revenge !

Fling your broad shields away—
Bootless against such foes ;
But hand to hand we'll fight to-day,
And with their bayonets close.
Grasp each man short his stabbing spear—
And, when to battle's edge we come,
Rush on their ranks in full career,
And to their hearts strike home !

¹ Kaffir name of contempt for Hottentots.

Wake ! Amakosa, wake !
 And muster for the war :
 The wizard-wolves from Keisi's brake,
 The vultures from afar,
 Are gathering at Uhlanga's call,
 And follow fast our westward way—
 For well they know, ere evening-fall,
 They shall have glorious prey !

Thomas Pringle.

Evening Rambles.

THE sultry summer-noon is past ;
 And mellow evening comes at last,
 With a low and languid breeze
 Fanning the mimosa trees,
 That cluster o'er the yellow vale,
 And oft perfume the panting gale
 With fragrance faint : it seems to tell
 Of primrose tufts in Scottish dell,
 Peeping forth in tender spring
 When the blithe lark begins to sing.

But soon, amidst our Libyan vale,
 Such soothing recollections fail ;
 Soon we raise the eye to range
 O'er prospects wild, grotesque, and strange :
 Sterile mountains, rough and steep,
 That bound abrupt the valley deep,

Heaving to the clear blue sky
Their ribs of granite, bare and dry,
And ridges by the torrents worn,
Thinly streaked with scraggy thorn,
Which fringes nature's savage dress,
Yet scarce relieves her nakedness.

But where the vale winds deep below
The landscape hath a warmer glow :
There the spekboom spreads its bowers
Of light green leaves and lilac flowers ;
And the aloe rears her crimson crest,
Like stately queen for gala drest ;
And the bright-blossomed Bean-tree shakes
Its coral tufts above the brakes,
Brilliant as the glancing plumes,
Of sugar birds among its blooms,
With the deep green verdure bending
In the stream of light descending.

And now along the grassy meads,
Where the skipping reebok feeds,
Let me through the mazes rove
Of the light acacia grove ;
Now while yet the honey-bee
Hums around the blossomed tree ;
And the turtles softly chide,
Woingly, on every side ;
And the clucking pheasant calls
To his mate at intervals ;

And the duiker at my tread
Suddenly lifts his startled head,
Then dives affrighted in the brake,
Like wild duck in the reedy lake.

My wonted seat receives me now—
This cliff with myrtle-tufted brow,
Towering high o'er grove and stream,
As if to greet the parting gleam.
With shattered rocks besprinkled o'er,
Behind ascends the mountain hoar,
Whose crest o'erhangs the Bushman's cave
(His fortress once and now his grave),
Where the grim satyr-faced baboon
Sits gibbering on the rising moon,
Or chides with hoarse and angry cry
The herdsman as he wanders by.

Spread out below in sun and shade,
The shaggy glen lies full displayed—
Its sheltered nooks, its sylvan bowers,
Its meadows flushed with purple flowers;
And through it like a dragon spread,
I trace the river's tortuous bed.
Lo! there the Chaldee-willow weeps
Drooping o'er the headlong steeps,
Where the torrent in his wrath
Hath rifted him a rugged path,
Like fissure cleft by earthquake's shock,
Through mead and jungle, mound and rock.

But the swollen water's wasteful sway,
Like tyrant's rage hath passed away,
And left the ravage of its course
Memorial of its frantic force.—
Now o'er its shrunk and slimy bed
Rank weeds and withered wrack are spread,
With the faint rill just oozing through,
And vanishing again from view ;
Save where the guana's glassy pool
Holds to some cliff its mirror cool,
Girt by the palmite's leafy screen,
Or graceful rock-ash, tall and green,
Whose slender sprays above the flood
Suspend the loxia's callow brood
In cradle-nests, with porch below,
Secure from winged or creeping foe—
Weasel or hawk or writhing snake ;
Light swinging, as the breezes wake,
Like the ripe fruit we like to see
Upon the rich pomegranate tree.

But lo ! the sun's descending car
Sinks o'er Mount Dunion's peaks afar ;
And now along the dusky vale
The homeward herds and flocks I hail,
Returning from their pastures dry
Amid the stony uplands high.
First, the brown Herder with his flock
Comes winding round my hermit-rock :
His mien and gait and gesture tell,
No shepherd he from Scottish fell ;

For crook the guardian gun he bears,
 For plaid the sheepskin mantle wears ;
 Sauntering languidly along ;
 Nor flute has he, nor merry song,
 Nor book, nor tale, nor rustic lay,
 To cheer him through his listless day.
 His look is dull, his soul is dark ;
 He feels not Hope's electric spark ;
 But, born the white man's servile thrall,
 Knows that he cannot lower fall.
 Next the stout Neat-herd passes by,
 With bolder step and blither eye ;
 Humming low his tuneless song,
 Or whistling to the horned throng.
 From the destroying foeman fled,—
 He serves the colonist for bread :
 Yet this poor heathen Bechuan
 Bears on his brow the port of man ;
 A naked, homeless exile he—
 But not debased by slavery.

Now, wizard-like, slow Twilight sails
 With soundless wing adown the vales,
 Waving with his shadowy rod
 The owl and bat to come abroad,
 With things that hate the garish sun,
 To frolic now the day is done.
 Now along the meadows damp
 The enamoured firefly lights his lamp.
 Link-boy he of woodland green
 To light fair Avon's Elfin Queen ;

Here, I ween, more wont to shine
To light the thievish porcupine,
Plundering my melon-bed,—
Or villain lynx, whose stealthy tread
Rouses not the wakeful hound
As he creeps the folds around.

But lo ! the night-bird's boding scream
Breaks abrupt my twilight dream ;
And warns me it is time to haste
My homeward walk across the waste,
Lest my rash step provoke the wrath
Of adder coiled upon the path,
Or tempt the lion from the wood,
That soon will prowl athirst for blood,—
Thus, murmuring my thoughtful strain,
I seek our wattled cot again.

Thomas Pringle.

Good Hope.

“ GOOD HOPE ” for this good land yet,
If we would but dare and do ;
If we would but stand with ready hand
To grasp ere the blessings go.

“ Good Hope ” for this good land yet,
If we would but stay life-streams,
Which will past us flow while we, too slow,
Stand rapt on the bank in dreams.

“ Good Hope ” for this good land yet,
If we would but cease to hope
That the rain will drop and bring a crop
While we idly sit and mope.

“ Good Hope ” for this good land yet,
If we work, e'en while we wait
For the sun and rain to ripen grain
We have sown, then left to fate.

“ Good Hope ” for this good land yet,
If we use each heav'n-sent gift
As a means to an end, and do not spend
Our best without care and thrift.

“ Good Hope ” for this good land yet,
If we live and struggle still
To a better life, through toil and strife,
With a stout heart and strong will.

20 William Rodger Thomson

“ Good Hope ” for this good land yet,
If our faith be active trust,
And not blind belief, which, at each grief,
Still mourns that what must be must.

“ Good Hope ” for this good land yet,
If we would but trust in God,
And the Christ who came and took our name
To bless, not to turn the sod.

William Rodger Thomson.

The Poet.

THE poet walks entranced o'er earth,
And, dreaming, touches Nature's strings,
And calls grand harmonies to birth ;
Men listen wond'ring as he sings.
He goeth oft to wild retreats,
Where Nature broods in solitude ;
There, in the Muses' haunted seats,
Enrapt he stands—as if he view'd
Strange visions on the face of heav'n.
His eye rolls o'er the boundless blue,
And then, as if his sight had giv'n
Wings to his soul, he soareth through
Th' empyrean vault, and upward flies
To scan deep mysteries, unseen
By common souls, whose earth-bound eyes
Are blinded with the dazzling sheen

William Rodger Thomson 21

Of glorious light, tow'rds which he soars.
Or, stretch'd upon the lap of earth,
When Spring breathes o'er the myriad pores
Which pierce the soil, and giveth birth
To Nature's buried loveliness—
To flowers and leaves, and all things fair ;
When the bright sun looks down to bless
His fruitful bride ; when throbbing air,
Warm with the sunshine, dances bright
O'er hill and dale, o'er land and wave ;
When birds, long dumb through Winter's night,
Returning, hail the dawn, which gave
Life to the earth, to them new voice—
Then, too, the poet's soul renews
Her slumb'ring might ; all things rejoice,
And flow'rs of thought bud as he views.

William Rodger Thomson.

Cape of Good Hope.

THERE is a land unknown to fame,
A land whose heroes have no name
In the grey records of past age ;
Unchronicled in hist'ry's page,
Untamed by art, yet wild and free.
That land lies in the southern sea,
It laughs to heav'n which smiles on it ;
There midway in wild waters set,

22 William Rodger Thomson

With suns serene and balmier breeze
Than ever swept these northern seas,
Its beetling crags rise vast, and war
With oceans, meeting from afar,
To break their billows on its shore
With fearful, never-ending roar.

Bold mariners who sailed of old
Through unknown seas in search of gold,
Saw those dark rocks, those giant forms,
And, fear-quelled, named them "Cape of Storms!"
O land of storms, I pine to hear
That music which made others fear ;
I long to see thy storm-fiend scowl,
I long to hear the fierce winds howl,
Hot with fell fires across thy plains.

Thou glorious land ! where Nature reigns
Supreme in awful loveliness.
O shall thy exiled son not bless
Those hills and dales of thine, where first
He roamed a careless child ; where burst
Thy tropic splendour on his eye ;
Where days were spent, whose mem'ries lie
Deep 'neath all afterthought and care,
Yet rise more buoyant than the air,
And float o'er all his days ? O home
Of beauty rare, where I did roam
In childhood's golden days, my prayer
For thee soars through this northern air.

Land of "Good Hope," thy future lies
 Bright 'fore my vision as thy skies !
 O Africa ! long lost in night,
 Upon the horizon gleams the light
 Of breaking dawn. Thy star of fame
 Shall rise and brightly gleam ; thy name
 Shall blaze on hist'ry's later page ;
 Thy birth-time is the last great age ;
 Thy name has been slave of the world ;
 But when thy banner is unfurled,
 Triumphant Liberty shall wave
 That standard o'er foul slav'ry's grave,
 And earth, decaying earth, shall see
 Her proudest, fairest child in thee !

William Rodger Thomson.

To a Sister.

FANNY, Fanny, dost remember
 Days long gone, when we were young ?
 Dost remember how we sported,
 How we laughed and how we sung ?
 Then we never dreamt of parting,
 But each joyous, careless day
 Fled ; and no thought of to-morrow
 Cross'd the sunshine of our way.
 Dost remember that old garden,
 'Twas so beautiful and fair,
 With its wealth of tropic splendour,
 With its balmy, perfum'd air ?

24 William Rodger Thomson

Dost remember the dark alleys,
Arch'd with many rarest vines,
With their clusters hanging thickly
In long, many-coloured lines ?
Dost remember that green arbour,
With its cool, refreshing shade,
With the passion-flowers shining
In the shadows which they made ?
Dost remember the great willows
Weeping o'er their weight of years,
Dipping in the pond beneath them,
And then drying up their tears
As they trailed their snake-like branches
O'er the dried and withered grass,
With their heavy, woeful weeping,
Bringing life where they did pass ?
Dost remember how we gather'd
Orange-blossoms 'neath the trees,
As they fell, like scented snowflakes,
In the balmy summer breeze ?
Dost remember all those flow'r-beds
With their wild, wild finery,
Nought but colour, colour, colour,
Laughing 'neath the bright blue sky ?

William Rodger Thomson.

Amakeya.

THIS ballad is founded on the following incident, which happened at the close of one of the Kaffir wars: Macomo, with all his people, was removed to the neighbourhood of Algoa Bay. He used every means to remain on his old location. His appeal was pathetic enough, but we have profited somewhat by our experience of the word of a Kaffir. "Here," said he, stretching his hand over the beautiful territory, "my father, a great chief, dwelt; these pastures were crowded with cattle; here I have lived to grow old; here my children have been born; let me die in peace where I have so long lived." These entreaties, however, could not be listened to for one moment, and as a last trial his daughter, Amakeya, the beauty of Kaffirland, made her way to the tent of Colonel Campbell, 91st Regiment, who, totally unprepared for her appearance, was yet more astonished at the sacrifice she offered if her father's sentence of banishment might be rescinded. She made her strange offer in all the consciousness and pride of beauty; and, with her finely-moulded arms folded before her, she spoke without hesitation, for she was guided by motives worthy a lofty cause. "If her father might remain on his own lands," she said, "she would be the sacrifice and guarantee for his future good faith towards the white man. She would leave her own people and follow Colonel Campbell, his home should be hers; she would forsake all and dwell with him. This was her last word, her final decision, and she would abide by it." Amakeya's motives were not unappreciated by her hearer, but the proposal was of course rejected, with every consideration for her position and the circumstances by which she had been actuated, and she departed with her father on his journey.—Mrs. H. Ward, *The Cape and the Kaffirs*.

FAR in the Kaffir's glorious land,
Beside a burning heap
Of ruins, sits an aged man,
Who bitterly doth weep.

26 William Rodger Thomson

Through his clasp'd hands the tears fall fast,
And wet the earth, where stood
His humble home, in ashes laid,
Red with his kindred's blood.

And curses, struggling with his grief,
Die on his quiv'ring lips ;
And tight he grasps the assegai,
Which still with life-blood drips.

Then, starting to his feet, he cast
An impious look on high :
" God of the whites," he cries, " who dwell'st
Beyond yon azure sky,

" Thy children are a cruel race
Of murderers and thieves.
Give back to me my warriors brave,
Fall'n thick as autumn leaves

" Before the hot blast of their guns,
Which, with its hailstorm, rode
O'er all our ranks, and made us fall
Like corn when it is mow'd.

" They say Thou art a God of peace—
Thy rebel children lie ;
They say Thou art a righteous judge :
For vengeance dread I cry !

" Avenge the wrongs we've suffered
For those who call on Thee ;
If Thou art just, then root out those
Who live by treachery ! "

The godless savage paused awhile—
And, with a flashing eye,
Look'd round o'er all that beauteous land,
Far stretching 'neath the sky.

Where'er he turn'd his eyes he saw
War's desolating brand ;
The smoke of burning villages
Arose on ev'ry hand.

The tow'ring mountains far away,
High heav'nward bore the blaze ;
O'er all the fruitful valleys hung
A thick and lurid haze.

“ There are the mountains where I track'd
The lions to their dens ;
Oft have I coursed the flying deer
Across those burning glens.

“ No more shall huntsman's shout be heard
On Mancazana's hills ;
No more shall huntsman slake his thirst
In Mancazana's rills ;

“ No more shall young men dance at eve,
Around the peaceful kraal ;
No more shall maidens wait to hear
Their brave young lovers call.

“ No more shall children sport around
The reed huts of their sires ;
Men, wives, and children—all are burn'd
Under the white man's fires ! ”

28 William Rodger Thomson

The old man paused, a choking sob
Burst from his heart of steel.
Ah ! white men, do ye ever think
The black man too can feel

Those large emotions of the heart
Which home and kindred wake,
Which swell up in our panting breasts
As if our hearts would break ?

While still he wept, a lovely maid
Crept from a wood hard by ;
Poor Amakeya's skin was black,
But Love beamed from her eye

As brightly as it beameth forth
In lordly homes of ease,
In happier climes, where sound of war
Ne'er scared off love-born Peace.

She stole close to the sobbing chief,
And look'd up in his face
With all a woman's tenderness—
Eve's universal grace.

“ My father, O my father ! list,
Ah ! weep not so, I pray ;
But come with me, I'll comfort thee,
And all thy grief allay.”

She took him gently by the hand,
And led him from that soil
Mark'd with the blood of those he loved
And all war's horrid toil.

And silently he follow'd her
Far up the mountain-brow ;
Far from the white man's glitt'ring tents,
Down in the vale below.

At last they reach'd a tow'ring rock,
Which cast its cooling shade
Far down the rugged mountain's steep,
And there her pace she stay'd.

" Come, father, sit and rest thee now
From the fierce heat of strife ;
I'll bring thee corn and milk to stay
The fainting spring of life."

She hurried to a neighb'ring cave
And brought thence milk and corn,
And, kneeling at his feet, she fed
The warrior war-worn.

The father look'd down on his child,
And smiled to see her care ;
Long time he spoke not, silently
He stroked her shining hair.

" Sweet Amakeya ! I am rich
Since thou art left to me—
The white man's Queen's not half so rich
As I, when I have thee.

" To-morrow, child, we'll leave this land,
Where thou wert born and bred ;
To-morrow we must seek a home
Unknown to white man's tread.

30 William Rodger Thomson

“ To-morrow’s setting sun must find
Us resting far from here ;
We can no more at eventide
Let fall the tribute tear

“ Upon the mound where rests the dust
Of her who you me gave ;
Ah ! when we’re gone, the white man’s plough
Will tear your mother’s grave ! ”

“ My father, say not so,” she cried ;
“ The white man may be moved ;
To-morrow let us go to him—
My pow’r’s not yet been proved.

“ Perchance he’ll listen to my tale,
Perchance I’ll move his heart,
Perchance he may call back the word
Which made us hence depart.”

“ My daughter, hope not thus ; ’tis vain ;
The white man’s stern command
Cannot be changed ; we must go hence,
And leave our fatherland !

“ My arms are gone ! I must obey ;
No safety more is here ;
Too long we’ve fought ! the strife is vain
Where victory’s so dear ! ”

“ My father, talk no more of war ;
I know the white man’s pow’r ;
Love moves all hearts, let love be then
Our refuge in this hour.

“ In this dark hour of deep despair,
Of sorrow and distress,
Love yet may conquer when the hands
Of war hang weaponless.

“ To-morrow when the sun is up,
When day has dawn'd again,
When night has lull'd the passions wild
Which war could not restrain,

“ We'll get us to the white chief's tent ;
My tears will move his heart ;
O say not nay ! one trial more,
And then we can depart.”

The father gave his slow consent
Unto her earnest pray'r ;
When woman prays, a savage e'en
Must yield to words so fair.

When scarce the morrow's sun had risen,
The chieftain and his child
Went down unto the white men's tents ;
He sad, she hopeful, smiled.

They pass'd through crowds of gaping men,
Who glared upon their foe
With sullen brow or scornful eye,
And pitied not his woe.

They came before the white chief's tent ;
He met them at the door,
And gazed in wonder at the maid,
Such graceful form she bore.

32 William Rodger Thomson

“ O white man ! ” spake the Kaffir chief,

“ We know that thou art brave ;
And brave men have not hearts of steel,
But save when they can save.

“ We come to crave one boon from thee :
Reverse thy stern command ;
O bid us not depart from here ;
This is our Fatherland !

“ We love it, as the white man loves
His home beyond the sea ;
Thou wouldst not let a stranger take
That dear-loved land from thee.

“ We'll live in peace, and do thy will ;
We'll call thy Queen our Queen ;
O let us die where we were born,
And let this waving green,

“ Which waves above our fathers' dust,
Once wave above our head ;
When white man's herds shall crop the grass
Where Kaffir cattle fed.”

The white man's brow grew stern, he spake—
“ No mercy shall be given
To black men who can break their oaths,
And fear no God in heav'n.

“ Ten years ago you ask'd for peace ;
The white man gave you peace ;
He gave back lands he took from you ;
From bonds he gave release.

“ How have you kept your faith with him ?

Where now the oaths you swore ?

Dost think the white man now will deal

As kindly as before ?

“ Nay ! you and yours have steeled his heart,

And driven pity thence ;

Nay, savage foe ! your wiles I know ;

Depart ! and get you hence.

“ Upon the borders of the sea,

Your thieving band may roam,

And find some other pleasant land—

This is no more your home.”

The savage chieftain heaved a sigh,

Then, turning to his child,

He laid his hand upon her head,

And said in accents mild,

“ Poor Amakeya ! dost thou hear ?

In vain, in vain, we crave ;

We have no home ! come, let us go

And seek some unknown grave ! ”

But proudly stepp'd the maiden forth,

And conscious of her charms,

She folded o'er her swelling breast

Her beauteous ebon arms.

And in sad accents, soft and clear,

And sobbing while she spake,

She pray'd so earnestly, then wept,

As if her heart would break.

“ O white man ! pity those grey hairs
Which grace my father's head ;
He'll fight no more, let him die here ;
Ah ! soon he must be dead !

“ O grant my prayer, and gratefully
I'll yield myself to thee ;
I'll go with thee where thou dost go,
E'en o'er the fearful sea.

“ I'll be thy slave, and toil away,
And never long to come
Unto this lovely land again :
This land which is my home.

“ But willingly I'll give up all !
And leave my father's side,
And leave my tribe, and leave my land,
And all thy will abide.

“ Let him but live to hunt the deer
On Mancazana's hills ;
Let him but live to quench his thirst
In Mancazana's rills.”

Amazed, the father heard such speech :

“ My daughter, speak not so ;
What ! dost thou think thy father then
Would ever let thee go,

“ And suffer slavery and shame,
That he might dwell in peace ?
Thou'rt mad, my child ; come, come, we'll go—
This idle praying cease.”

He fell upon her neck and wept,
And pressed her to his heart :
“ My peerless Amakeya ! come—
We'll never, never part.”

The white man's haughty look relaxed,
A tear roll'd down his face,
And, wond'ringly, he gazed upon
That form of matchless grace.

And then—with mien as if he spoke
To dame of high degree—
He bow'd before that savage girl,
And answered soothingly :

“ Thou noble creature ! God has made
Thee beautiful and fair ;
And given thee a soul as pure
As e'er breathed Christian pray'r.

“ But go,—I dare not hear thee speak,
I dare not hear thee pray ;
It grieves my heart, my noble maid,
But—I must answer “ nay ” :

“ The stern command I gave, does come
From higher pow'r than mine ;
But go in peace, thy words have smoothed
Thy father's lot and thine.”

Then mournfully the maiden look'd
Upon her aged sire,
Still weeping on her breast, as if
In tears he would expire.

36 William Rodger Thomson

“ Come, father ! far away we'll go !
I'll ever comfort thee ;
We'll leave our home, and seek our graves
Far by the great blue sea ! ”

They left the white man's glitt'ring tents
And climb'd the mountain brow ;
The father filled with sad despair,
The maiden hopeless now.

Few weeks have pass'd ; the Kaffir girl
Has left her native land,
And travell'd far o'er hill and dale,
And now sits by the strand.

She gazes on that mighty sea
She ne'er had seen before ;
Half-pleased, half-awed, she hears the waves
Hoarse-moaning on the shore.

She loves to see the stately waves
Come rolling to the land,
And dash their foam-crests on the rocks,
And murmur o'er the sand.

She speaks no word, she moves no limb,
But sits as in a trance,
And ever looks out to the sea
With that same wond'ring glance.

Long years have pass'd—the Kaffir girl
Still loves to come at eve,
And sit upon some beetling crag,
And with the sad sea grieve.

Poor Amakeya ! years shall pass,
And white men still shall come
Across that sea, and still press on,
And take thy new-found home !

But while one black man shall be found
Where thousands now do rove,
Shall still the touching tale be told
Of Amakeya's love.

William Rodger Thomson.

The Funeral of Livingstone.

LIST ! there is music sounding !
Not airy strains, that lead the mazy dance ;
Not trumpet tones that stir the warrior's soul ;
But soft, and slow, and solemn, as it swells
And rolls afar and dies, 'midst its own echoes
From vaulted roof, and lofty aisle dim-lighted,
Where clustering columns rise, and rainbow rays
Gleam in their varied glory o'er the scene.

'Tis in the sacred fane where sleeps the dust
Of those whom Britain loves to honour, who
Shed living honour by their deeds on her,
Challenging place upon the rolls of fame.
Sages, and saints, and sons of song lie there ;
Wresters of nature's secrets ; senators,
Whose thund'rous eloquence could awe the world ;

Patriots whose life-blood for their country flowed ;
War chiefs who led her armies on to glory ;
Statesmen with eye far-reaching, who could thread
Diplomacy's dark mazes, and the helm
With firm hand grasping, steer the nation's bark
Through storms of strife to honour and to peace.

And royalty's proud dust lies mouldering there,
'Neath sculptured marbles, or 'midst gilded shrines :
While high o'erhead the ancient banners droop.—
Monarchs of other days—of other ages,
Successive generations of the great,
Who ruled the realm of England as she grew
From isolate obscurity to greatness
That with a fame undying fills the world.

Lo ! there—an open grave ! and heads are bare,
And bent ; and bosoms heave, and tears are falling
From youthful womanhood,—from hoary age.
Men weep, as slowly through the reverent throng
Is borne what hides from view a shrivelled form,
Wasted and featureless : yet round that bier
Stand silently the great of many lands.
Britain's high born stand there ; and kings of men
Of other realms stand there by envoy. There
The sons of science gather, and the friends
Of light and liberty. The Churches' messengers
Look on in sadness there ; and a vast throng,
Crowding around, sigh forth a nation's sympathy.

Tokens of reverent love—azalea wreaths,
Laurel and myrtle, with fair flowers entwined,
Bright immortelles, branches of Afric's palm—
(Symbol of triumph e'en in death) are there,
And, honour to the honoured !—Britain's Queen

Sign of "respect and admiration" sends,—
Her own, and royal daughter's funeral gifts
To deck the bier.

And who is it that thus
Draws to himself in death the eyes of nations ?
Is it some warrior leader, who has died
In the proud hour of victory, and, wept
By a whole people's tears, lies down to rest ?
—Or is it one who, in a nation's peril,
Has earned a nation's gratitude by wise
And warning counsels in her council halls ?
—Is it a Prince has died ? That royalty
Should sigh her grief, and nobles weep around ?
'Tis LIVINGSTONE !—That name a thousand tongues,
Through years of hope and fear alternate, uttered ;
While he who bore it, deep in Afric's wilds,
Solving her mystery of ages, trod
Her deserts, traced her streams—a pioneer
Of science, commerce, liberty, and mercy.
—A "weaver boy" thus honoured !—Wherefore not ?
He wore, indeed, no ducal coronet ;
Nor dwelt in lordly hall. But "stamp" of "rank"
He needed not, while nature's "gold" of manhood,
Solid, and pure, and bright, shone through his soul.

H. H. Dugmore.

England.

* * * * *

O ENGLAND, speck amidst the world of waters !
Thou art the world's great wonder. Realms afar
Have heard thy voice, have seen thy light, have felt thy
power.

Some, jealous, envy thee ; some bless thy name.
The might of freedom, and the light of truth,—
The freedom that can burst the spirit's bonds,
The light that leads that spirit up to heaven,—
These are thy charge, and for the wide world's weal,
Be faithful to thy trust, thou honour'd Isle !
Thou hast a glorious mission to the nations.
Hold fast to the truth of God with strong right hand ;
Cast forth the traitors that would take thy crown.
Still send thy sons, as Mercy's angels, forth
To sound in silver tones, to far-off lands,
The trumpet of the everlasting gospel ;
So shall Heaven's smile be thy perpetual light,
And Heaven's dread power, " a wall of fire," thy guard.

* * * * *

H. H. Dugmore.

A Sunrise Thought at "Cove Rock,"
near East London.

KING of the Golden Orient ! Lo ! He comes
And mounts, magnificent, his burning throne ;
Smiling in glory o'er the world of waters,
Whose joyous waves leap welcome to his coming.
See how the streaming rays, his almoners,
Fling forth his largesses in flashing brilliants,
Which the waves catch, and toss from crest to crest
In dancing rapture ! 'Tis a glorious sight
To see a king right welcome to his subjects ;
To hear the voice of Gladness universal
Greeting his royal smile. Not sea alone,
But ocean, earth, and sky join look and voice
In smile and song. See there in the far west,
Where little cloudlets cluster, as they hang
In modest diffidence upon the outskirts
Of the vast audience-throng ! they, too, are flushing
Bright with the universal joy ; and, hark !
Breezes are striking their Æolian harps
Among the woofs that wave along the hills ;
While the deep voices of the surge, far pealing,
Thunder their ceaseless anthem to his praise.

Brief, as befitting, is the monarch's audience ;
For who may look upon the King of light
With eye unblenching ? Now in massy folds,
The darkening curtains of his cloud pavilion
Gather around him ; and tho' dazzling still

Their broad gold fringes wave, the weak eye rests
From his transpiercing glance of unveiled glory.

Hail ! glorious image of the King of Kings !
Seen or unseen, thou givest light, and life,
And joy, and beauty to revolving worlds
That circle round thy throne. Centre of Power !
Thy mystery of might upholds, sustains,
And governs as the Delegate of God,
Their measur'd harmony of ceaseless motion ;
Reining their fleetness with an arm of strength
Felt and obeyed in the far depths of space,
Where roll remotest planets round their spheres
In twilight solitude unseen, unknown.

H. H. Dugmore.

Thoughts Suggested by a Little Shell at Cove Rock.

DELICATE, fragile, tiny shell,
Thou hast a wondrous tale to tell.
I find thee here on the ocean strand ;
The billows have borne thee safe to land.
Yet those billows have proved the proud ship's grave,
And have mocked the power of man to save,
As its shattered fragments, far and wide,
Were strewn on the shore by the surging tide.
But thou art here, and all unharmed !
Say, how hast thou its fury charmed,

That its mighty waves, on their foaming breast,
Should bear thee safe to a place of rest ?

The rock rears high his haughty form,
And challenges proud the ocean storm ;
And he tosses the wild waves raging back,
As his challenge provokes their fierce attack.
But again, and again, and again they come,
And vainly the rock resists its doom ;
The waves are mighty, and know their might.
“ Never have we been vanquished in fight !
We kiss the sands of the yielding shore,
We rend the rock in his pride of power :
Be it soon, be it late, thy fate is sealed ;
Be it soon, be it late, thou shalt surely yield ! ”
And it yields at last : with a headlong leap
It buries its shame in the foaming deep.
And the waves toss high their plummy spray,
As they dance triumphant around their prey.

And yet, little shell, I find thee here,
And nothing hath wrought thee harm or fear ;
Though shattered rocks, and a rock-strewn shore,
Give tokens dire of the ocean's power.
Tell me, tiny, beautiful thing !
Filmy and frail as the butterfly's wing—
An infant's finger could crush thee to dust—
What hast thou then wherein to trust ?
And whence thy courage and power to brave
The surging might of the wild sea wave ?
“ I have not braved the ocean's might ;
I reared no front with the waves to fight.

I yielded me meek to the billow's force,
As it swept me along in its onward course.
My weakness was strength in the tempest's hour,
And my safety I found in the ocean's power."

H. H. Dugmore.

Past and Present.

OVER the waters wild and deep,
Where the storm-waves roll, and the storm-winds
sweep—

Over the waters see them come !
Breasting the billow's curling foam,
Fathers for children seeking a home—
In Afric's Southern Wilds.

Wilderness lands of brake and glen,
The wolf's and the panther's gloomy den ;
Wilderness plains where the springbok bounds,
And the lion's voice from the hills resounds ;
And the vulture circles in airy rounds—
Are Afric's Southern Wilds.

" Hand to the labour ! heart and hand !
Our sons shall inherit an altered land.
Harvests shall wave o'er the virgin soil,
Cottages stand, and gardens smile,
And the songs of our children the hours beguile—
'Mid Afric's Southern Wilds.

“ Make we the pride of the forest yield ;
Wrest from the wilderness field on field ;
And to brighten our hope, and lighten our care,
And gain the aid of our Father there,
Raise we to heaven the voice of prayer—
From Afric’s Southern Wilds.”

.
The locust clouds have darkened heaven,
The “ rusted ” fields to the flame are given ;
The war-cry is echoing wild and loud,
For the war of the savage, fierce and proud,
Has burst like the storm from the thunder-cloud—
On Afric’s Southern Wilds.

“ Never despair, though the harvests fail ;
Though the hosts of a savage foe assail ;
Never despair, we shall conquer yet,
And the toils of our earlier years forget.
In hope’s bright glory our sun shall set—
’Midst Afric’s Southern Wilds.”

.
Our toil-worn fathers are sinking to rest,
But their children inherit their hope’s bequest.
Valleys are smiling in harvest pride ;
There are fleecy flocks on the mountain side ;
Cities are rising to stud the plains ;
The life-blood of commerce is coursing the veins
Of a new-born Empire, that grows and reigns—
Over Afric’s Southern Wilds.

H. H. Dugmore.

The Ocean—Storm and Calm.

I LOOK upon the ocean. Far away,
A fleet of thunder-clouds is sailing by.
High in mid heaven the aerial canvas swells,
And proudly scorns the breeze's proffered aid ;
Instinct with its own spirit's breath of life,
That bears it onward in its majesty ;
While ever and anon the signal flash
From van, and rear, and centre, tells of might
Resistless, stern, and slow, and dark, and grand :
Its shadows sweep o'er ocean's heaving billows ;
While avant-couriers, on the lightning's wing,
Herald its coming to the distant realms
Beyond the horizon's verge.

'Tis sunset on the ocean ! Let us gaze :
A Sabbath sunset ; and all things combine
To give it peace and beauty ; for the winds
Have folded their broad pinions, and have sunk
To peaceful slumber on the ocean's breast—
The sportive waves, that tossed their spray erewhile,
Displume their crests in reverence for the hour,
And all is calm around.

The curtain cloud
That hung o'er all the west throws wide its folds,
And in the clear blue ether far away
Bright islands of the blest seem floating, free
From the rough cares that fret this lower world,
And radiant in a glory all divine.

H. H. Dugmore.

Lay me Low.

LAY me low, my work is done ;
I am weary, lay me low
Where the wild flowers woo the sun,
Where the balmy breezes blow,
Where the butterfly takes wing,
Where the aspens drooping grow,
Where the young birds chirp and sing—
I am weary, let me go.

I have striven hard and long
In the world's unequal fight
Always to resist the wrong,
Always to maintain the right ;
Always with a stubborn heart
Taking, giving blow for blow :
Brother, I have played my part,
And am weary, let me go.

Stern the world and bitter cold,
Irksome, painful to endure ;
Everywhere a love of gold,
Nowhere pity for the poor ;
Everywhere mistrust, disguise,
Pride, hypocrisy, and show ;
Draw the curtain, close mine eyes,
I am weary, let me go.

Others, 'chance, when I am gone,
May restore the battle-call,
Bravely lead the good cause on,
Fighting in the which I fall ;

God may quicken some true soul
Here to take my place below
In the heroes' muster-roll :
I am weary, let me go.

Shield and buckler, hang them up ;
Drape the standard on the wall :
I have drained the mortal cup
To the finish, dregs and all.
When our work is done 'tis best,
Brother, best that we should go :
I'm aweary, let me rest,
I'm aweary, lay me low.

John Noble.

The Cape of Good Hope.

(A Patriotic Song.)

LAND of serene and sunny skies,—
Land of the lion and fleet gazelle ;
Land where the summer never dies,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land where the birds in gorgeous plume
Flit through the bush or their love-song tell ;
Land where the flowers show Eden's bloom,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land where the hunter scours the plains,
Free as the bird o'er the ocean's swell ;
Land of kind nature's soothing strains,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land where the grape and the orange grow
Deep in yon cool sequestered dell ;
Land of the melon's luscious flow,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land where fields of golden grain,
Rich in their bounteous fruitage swell ;
Land of sleek herds in lengthened train,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land of a stalwart yeoman race,—
Stern, but with hearts as true as a bell ;
Homely, but full of kindly grace,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land of the dark Amakosa tall,
Seeking release from the savage spell ;
Land where there's room and to spare for all,
Cape of Good Hope, we love thee well.

Land of Good Hope ! our prayer we raise,—
May peace and plenty with thee dwell ;
Filling our hearts with grateful praise,
For this bright land we love so well.

W. Selwyn.

Sweet Falls the Eve.

SWEET falls the eve in Chumie's Vale,
And blithe awakes the morn,
The flow'rets scent the early gale
That rustles through the corn.

The moonbeam glances on the hills,
And silvers o'er the lawn ;
While tuneful dance the gushing rills
To hail the golden dawn.

There Nature with her fairest dress
The lofty hills adorn ;
The morning breeze the flowers caress,
And Plenty fills her horn.

No fairer maids in Afric's land
Than where the streamlets glide
Among the Chumie Mountains grand
To lone Kieskamma's tide.

A. C. Fairlie.

Chumie Fair.

OH! Chumie fair, my childhood's home,
While far from thee I now do roam,
Yet oft in fancy, oft in dreams
I wander by thy crystal streams.

Thy woodlands green, thy mountains grand
Rise as by touch of magic wand,—
Methinks I see thy waterfalls,
And hear thy wild dove's am'rous calls.

With fond remembrance do I cling
To where the sweet mimosas fling
Their rich perfume o'er hill and dale,
And scent the winds of summer gale.

Though other lands are fair to view,
And other skies are quite as blue,
Yet back to thee my soul doth roam,
O Chumie fair, my childhood's home.

A. C. Fairlie.

Buffalo Banks.

BUFFALO banks are fair to view
In summer-time of year,
When flowers are wet with pearly dew
And birds sing loud and clear.

Buffalo banks, your mazy groves
Are filled with wild birds' song,
And oh ! how pleasant 'tis to rove
Your waving woods among.

Meandering walks your depths adorn,
Through forest and through glade,
Where Cupid reigns and rules supreme,
And lovers' vows are paid.

Secluded in your winding groves—
Those groves by Nature made,
How sweet the golden hours would pass,
With Tylden's bonnie maid.

In leafy shade or flowery dell,
By Buffalo's flowing tide,
With thee for aye I fain would dwell,
Sweet lass of Tylden side.

A. C. Fairlie.

The Nightingale.¹*(A Reverie.)*

* * * * *

HEARKEN ! 'tis the Nightingale
O'er the silence doth prevail,
Ravishing the listening air
With his solo rich and clear,
With his exquisite delight
Thrilling all the heart of night.
Surely naught akin to pain
Is the theme of such a strain :
Only love's divinest treasure,
Only love's unshadowed pleasure
Can give birth to such a measure ;
Love, without its care and pain,
Such as others seek in vain,
Surely is this creature's gain !
Love we dream of, pining, yearning,
To be lost within its burning !

The mysterious music falls
Now at wayward intervals :
Now a rivulet of song,
As from springs of Helicon,
Through the darkness bubbles on—
Bubbles through the breathless air
In notes so full, so rich, so clear,
Angels lean from heaven to hear,
Lean until their listening faces
Light the interstellar spaces,

¹ *The Nightingale and other Poems.*

As they whisper their surmise :
“ ’Tis a sister in disguise,
Singing for the world’s delight,
The cantata, she, by right,
Should have sung in Heaven to-night.”

Now the witching rhythm flows
Softly to a perfect close,
In severed notes that drowse and swoon,
If for ever, ah, too soon !
And we sigh the song should be
So fugitive, when suddenly
A swift, aerial round
Of voluptuous, throbbing sound
Flows again in wild delight
Through the enamoured hush of night,
On and on, as if to drain
His heart of music in one strain
The bird, if bird it be, were fain.
’Tis a bird, and nothing more,
With one song, his only store,
And he repeats it o’er and o’er
To be more perfect than before.
But that bird in heavenly spheres,
Singing to angelic ears,
That did never suffer wound
From a false discordant sound,
For his singing would be crowned.
A pause—and now the vale is full
Of intermittent, musical
Trills of rapture, beautiful !
Rippling in the dreamy sky,
How they flow, and ebb, and die !

How they revel, toy and tarry,
Falter with the bliss they carry !
Tremble, with excess of gladness,
On the narrow brink of sadness !
Till the serenade appears
But to bubble up through tears ;
And the music's tender stress
Yields again to silentness :
And the artful bird capricious,
In a reverie delicious,
Mute upon the star-lit spray,
Meditates his winsome lay :
Or, perchance, 'twere sooth to say,
He pauses to rejoice,
And marvel at his matchless voice,
And so awhile forgets to sing
For his own music listening :
And hence the hush, while leaf and wing,
Shadow, starlight, everything,
In this mystical recess
Amid the hills is motionless,
Lest the timid creature hear,
Rise and vanish into air ;
Nor thereafter dare nor deign,
Here to fold his wings again.

Ah, their vigil is not vain !
Hark ! the music falls like rain,
When in heaven's bright abyss,
One lone cloud and no wind is.
So waywardly, so tenderly,
Note by note the melody

On th' absorbing silence falls
At divinest intervals,
Wherein bird and music seem
The creation of some dream.
Oh, but hearken ! clear and strong
Again the swift notes throb and throng,
Rejoicing in a rush of song,
Sweet and passionate above
All that words can tell of love,
Flowing on and on, as tho'
It would never cease to flow,
For the singer, in his gladness,
Sings himself to very madness,
And, to share his heart's delight
With all around, would flood the night
With music, as the perfect moon
Floods it with her stintless boon
Of splendour, when she hovers bright,
Pure and naked in the height
Of heaven's dome of crystallite.
But not the minstrel's utmost art
Can fully to the world impart
The song he sings within his heart ;
And here, here too, the real
Reaches not its dream-ideal ;
And the bird, so long o'erwrought
By incommunicable thought,
Yearns, until his voice is fraught
With sobs and tears and notes that wane,
And the wild impassioned strain
Dies away, nor wakes again.

* * * * *

W. E. Hunter.

Written on Recovery from Sickness.

How dreamlike, strange, is this
Reprieve to happiness
And life ! to sit at ease
In comfort of green trees !
And marvelling hear
Thrush and blackbird piping near ;
Whilst, thro' every passive sense,
Creeps a healing influence,
That, baptizing heart and brain,
Renews and makes me whole again !

No more, like one for whom
There is nor light nor gloom,
Silence nor sound,
His sleep is so profound,
I lie, in seeming rest,
With hands prayer-folded on my breast,
Silent, as slow nights and days
Pass on undistinguished ways,
Silent, tho' my heart made moan,
Sadly to herself alone,
Saying, " Now, dissolves the snow " ;
Saying, " Now, the violets blow ;—
Ah, when I am laid more low,
They will blow more close to me,
Closer still and I not see,
Not know."—
But lo !
I while away

Once again a summer's day,
In this pleasant sylvan place,
Where the alders interlace
Their boughs above me, and the blue
Bells and flowers of purple hue
Make beautiful the lone recess
With glamour of their loveliness.

—Nature for herself against
All the world this valley fenced.
For her own delight she wrought
In sculpture her poetic thought :
Then she breathed upon it, till
It breathed to her again, and rill
And herb and flower returned the smile
Of love, that lit her face the while.
How beautiful it is ! How meet,
For the solace of retreat !
Guardian hills have charge to keep
Watch around it, steep on steep,
Save, to westward, where a space
Opens in their green embrace,
And, behind, the ocean paves
The chasm with protecting waves.

Thro' the tranquil, sylvan valley
Toys a streamlet musically ;
All too happy to haste on,
Such sweet themes it dwells upon,
With a low and inward voice
To itself it doth rejoice ;
And the little sedge-birds sit

In the reeds and hark to it ;
And from banks of mossy green,
Flowers that love it droop and lean,
As it lingers, winds, and wanders
Under willow trees and alders—
As it lingers, winds and flows
'Neath the lilies' driven snows,
And a yellow dragon-fly
Crosses it incessantly.
—Ever may the streamlet be
Clear as now, untainted, free !
And the vale,—may no men win it
From the blackbird and the linnet,
And the thrush that harbour in it !

Now the song-birds throng the bushes,
And the water-birds the rushes ;
And thro' golden haze, the bee
Darting, seeks her treasury
With what nectar she could win
From the tired flowers folding in ;
And the landscape all alight
With rose and amber, depth and height,
Burns beneath the fiery sky ;
And the radiant waters vie
With heaven's splendour, where the sun,
Now his western goal is won,
Stands upon the molten wave,
Magician-like, as if he gave
A farewell blessing to the earth,
And foretold to-morrow's birth,
Ere lowlier, on the ocean's breast,

He bows in worship, and to rest
Sinks beyond our vision's quest.
—How calm it is ! Earth, sea, and air
Hush with him in silent prayer !
So awhile,—then clear and strong
A sweet gush of vesper song !
All the heart of music throbbing
In a bird's ecstatic sobbing,
As the purple shadows close
Over amber, over rose,
And a chime from far away
Rings the passing of the day.

—As a lover, tired of roaming,
Who returneth in the gloaming ;
Who returneth home at last,
After months and perils past,
As with gentle hand he presses
Back the loved one's silken tresses,
Gazes earnestly a space,
On her dear familiar face,
Reads it fondly o'er and o'er,
And finds it fairer than before.
Nature, thus I gaze on thee,
Gaze on earth and sky and sea,
Gaze and gaze, until my sight
Is tear-clouded by delight,
To pain united, in the stress
Of mystery and loveliness.

W. E. Hunter.

Margaret.

MAIDENS, on this narrow bed,
Drop the flowers, but do not tread ;
All that earth knew how to keep
Of Margaret is fast asleep.
Underneath the sod it lies,
With death's darkness in those eyes
That were wont to show at dawn,
Blue depths where our light was born ;
For the radiant spirit flown,
Still our hearts unceasing moan—
For the radiant inmate dear,
That for one elysian year
Tarried on the earth, to see
If it might fit dwelling be
For a guest as pure as she,—
Then affrighted (woe the day !)
On swift wings, she fled away
To that country lying far,
Where the other angels are—
Fled ! and left us nothing, save
To protect this little grave,
Which we keep, for love of her,
Ever unprofaned and fair.
Softly on her sacred bed
Scatter flowers, but do not tread.

W. E. Hunter.

The Voorloopers.

THEY hasten to their heritage,
The guerdon of their days,
To labour long and wearily
For scanty gold or praise ;
To toil unseen and overmuch,
And if their meed be fame,
To carve themselves an epitaph
To mark their place and name.

They hasten to their heritage,
The right to bridge and build,
To serve among the journeymen,
To suffer with the guild ;
To plan the work, and found it fair,
And, ere 'tis gable high,
To pass the trowel to the next,
And turn aside to die.

They hasten to their heritage,
The tender and the tried ;
Each tide beholds them outward bound,
God wot, the field is wide.
They bring the best of heart and hand,
Of blood, and breed, and birth ;
Their graves upon our frontiers lie,
To testify their worth.

They hasten to their heritage,
The feeble and the fain ;
They bring the best of youth and hope,
To garner age and pain,

To glean the dole of little thanks,
 To suffer and be dumb ;
 To die when duty names the man—
 And still their cohorts come.

Perceval Gibbon.

Mimosa.

THE bloom of the mimosa
 Between your lips and me,
 Withholds you like a lattice
 Of golden filigree.

The thorns of the mimosa,
 Between your breast and me,
 Are like the blades of vengeance
 That guard the Eden tree.

The breach in the mimosa,
 That gives your lips to me,
 Is like the breath of blessing
 That sets the spirit free.

The scent of the mimosa,
 That rains on you and me,
 Is like a dear remembrance
 Of bliss that used to be.

Perceval Gibbon.

The Veldt.

CAST the window wider, sonny,
Let me see the veldt,
Rolling grandly to the sunset,
Where the mountains melt,
With the sharp horizon round it,
Like a silver belt.

Years and years I've trekked across it,
Ridden back and fore,
Till the silence and the glamour
Ruled me to the core ;
No man ever knew it better,
None could love it more.

There's a balm for crippled spirits
In the open view,
Running from your very footsteps
Out into the blue ;
Like a waggon-track to heaven,
Straight 'twixt God and you.

There's a magic, soul-compelling,
In the boundless space,
And it grows upon you, sonny,
Like a woman's face—
Passionate and pale and tender,
With a marble grace.

There's the sum of all religion
In its mightiness ;
Winged truths, beyond your doubting,

Close about you press.
God is greater in the open—
Little man is less.

There's a voice pervades its stillness,
Wonderful and clear ;
Tongues of prophets and of angels,
Whispering far and near,
Speak an everlasting gospel
To the spirit's ear.

There's a sense you gather, sonny,
In the open air ;
Shift your burden ere it break you :
God will take His share.
Keep your end up for your own sake ;
All the rest's His care.

There's a promise, if you need it,
For the time to come ;
All the veldt is loud and vocal
Where the Bible's dumb.
Heaven is paved with gold for parsons,
But it's grassed for some.

There's a spot I know of, sonny,
Yonder by the stream ;
Bushes handy for the fire,
Water for the team.
By the old home outspan, sonny,
Let me lie and dream.

Perceval Gibbon.

Voices of the Veldt.

* * * *

LAND ! I will show you land ; mile upon mile
Of ridge and kopje, bush and candid waste,
Sun-drowned and empty, tacit as the sea,
Belted about with the horizon line,
And over all the blank and curving sky.
Is it not still ? And with the sacred calm
Of cool church shadows, where one speaks and moves
As though God spied upon one ; and all things—
Trespassing sunbeams, spiders, swarming motes,
The profile of a woman at her prayers,
The tang that rules the sermon, one's own thoughts—
Go bowed below a dread significance.
You know the feeling ; but the veldt, my veldt,
Is more than any church, more vastly still
Than grey cathedrals drowsing down the years,
More fraught with solemn meanings and dim dreams,
Than any storied hive of shaveling saints.
Still, did I say ? Well, still it surely is,
And yet it hath a voice, its mood of sound,
As prophets, meanly meditating, start
From torpor into fired utterance.
On its occasion it will speak in tones
That thundered first of all on Sinai.
The voice of all the world and all the sky
Poured through the tempest-trumpet, and, between
The drum of sullen strength and passion's shrill,
Riding above the thunder and the wind,

There comes at last the still small voice of God.
And it will speak sometimes, far off and clear,
Aloof, unflushed, ungilded, calm, superb,
The voice of angels at the judgment-seat,
Impartial, cold exponents of the law.
And then it chants ! O morning stars in song,
O hills in choir triumphant, ringing earth,
And dome of shuddering echoes, hush and hear !
It has the anthem laid upon its lips
Which all creation sang at the seventh dawn,
And God heard, smiling, saying : " It is good."
And in wild breezes, ere the timid spring
Quite flings her draperies apart, and dares
Her naked foot of blessing on the turf,
Her naked breast of promise on the air,
It pipes, like that goat-footed god of Greece
Beside his stream, pillowed on life itself,
And sometimes like the potent piper, who
Charmed hell to hush its dreary agony.

* * * * *

Perceval Gibbon.

Komani.¹

RUNS Komani ever ?
Weep the willows still ?
Gleam the grass-fires nightly
Wreathed upon the hill ?
Comes the summer singing ?
Tiptoes yet the spring ?
Tell me of Komani—
Tell me everything.

For yonder by Komani
I left my lady fair,²
Who smiled for ever under
Her aureole of hair—
Smiled and would not hearken,
Heard and would not smile,
I turned me from Komani
A long and weary while.

Often by Komani
I heard my lady's name
Amid the tinkling ripples,
And is it still the same ?
Or goes Komani voiceless
Where music used to be,
Forgetful of my lady,
As once she was of me.

Perceval Gibbon.

¹ A river near Queenstown.

² Referring to a newspaper venture.

Jim.

(An Incident.)

FROM the Kei to Umzimkulu

We chartered to ride,

But before we reached Umtata

Jim turned in and died.

By Bashee I buried Jim.

Ah ! but I was fond of him ;

An' but for the niggers grinning,

I'd—yes, I'd have cried.

'Twas a weary trek through Griqualand,

And me all alone ;

Three teams and a dozen niggers

To boss on my own.

And I felt a need for Jim ;

It was just the job for him,

Hazin' the teams and the niggers,

Hard grit to the bone.

I lost a load at Kokstad :

An axle fell through ;

I hadn't heart to tinker it,

So pushed on with two.

If I'd only had old Jim !

Axles never broke with him ;

But I never could handle waggons

Like Jim used to do.

I came to Umzimkulu

With a pain in my head ;

I ought to ha' bought med'cine,

But I liquored instead :

R. J. T. Jefferson

Never used to drink with Jim ;
There's a girl that asked for him ;
But the jackals root at Bashee—
An' Jim, he's dead !

Perceval Gibbon.

The River of Life.

LIKE the tide of a mighty river,
The years are running fast,
As they hurry us on to the future,
Like leaves on their current cast.

And that river shall merge in the ocean
Of a mystic eternity ;
And the banks are the countless ages
That mark its course to the sea.

God breathes on the dim old forests,
Upon those banks that grow ;
And the leaves from the stately branches
Are shed on the stream below.

A few there be on the river,
That whirl and softly glide
By the banks of Ease and Pleasure,
With a smooth and gentle tide.

But many are cast in the shallows
With a heavy lading of woe ;
And the waters are bitter with sorrow,
And the tide to the sea runs slow.

Yet some sing blithe on their journey,
Though tossed on an angry wave ;
And they conquer the terrors of tempests,
For the hearts of these are brave.

Still, oft as the future lowers,
Like a tempest overhead,
They look for the light of a beacon
In the refuge of the dead.

And they wonder what days shall be numbered,
Or how many years be sped,
Ere sorrow shall seek for a resting
In Nature's mouldy bed.

But that resting seems ever distant,
Though sometimes, sudden and fast,
A leaf on the banks is stranded,
And the River of Life runs past.

For on, and for ever onward,
The River of Life still runs,
Still strews its banks with its dead leaves,
And wearies its living ones.

Yet though upon life's journey,
Our hearts will needs despond,
When the Past gleams through a desert,
And we know not what's beyond.

Far, far in the infinite Future,
Immutable, dim, and vast,
Looms the haze of that mighty Ocean,
Where the River will merge at last.

And this is life we are learning,
Patient and brave to be ;
And the goal for which we are steering,
Is *Immortality*.

R. J. T. Jefferson.

The Harmonies of Waters.

SING, sing, ye mellow streams and laughing brooks !
Sound every fountain and glad waterfall !
Through sylvan shades and dells,
Go singing to the sea !

More fair are ye, Nature's sweet bards, more fair
Than airy thought or fairy dream can be,
Whose beauties do not last,
But gleam and fade away !

Companions of immortal bards that sing,
More true are ye, more true in heart and voice
Than many glories be,
That bid the soul rejoice !

An open charm is yours— a subtle power :
The charm of beauty and the power of song,
To while the pleasant hour
For many a weary mind !

Ye that have common beauty with the heavens,
With each bright star of heav'n and flow'r of earth,
And with the forests bare,
And waving mountain pines !

Ye that have common music with the spheres,
With each soft-singing orb and warbling bird,
And with the sounding sea,
And souging of the wind !

When little songsters pour their melting lays,
How sweetly do your bird-like warblings rise ;
But, in the hush of night,
More earnest tones ye raise.

The sun shall kiss you with his golden beams,
The moon with silver light shall crown you fair ;
Sing on, melodious streams,
Sweet music lightens care !

R. J. T. Jefferson.

The Voices of Nature.

THE various song
Of chanting birds that sweetly throng
Their native skies,
Or careless hopping, wanton on
Earth's leafy trees ;
The busy hum of droning bees ;
The chirruping and piping thrill
Of insect life on vale and hill ;
The brooding turtle's coo ;
The distant lowing herd and bleating sheep,
That soothe the drowsy sluggard's early sleep ;
The croak and drum of frogs, and whistle too
That from the marsh arise ;
The souging wind ;

The tempest raging and unkind,
In forest dim and lonely wood,
The cascade dashing down the glen ;
The fountain laughing in the fen ;
The wildly-warbling, running brook—
 A thread of silver sheen,
 That warbles past
 Where poets love to dream,
With shades of spreading boughs o'ercast,
And golden sunshine oft between—
A little rhyme from nature's book ;
The murmur of the river's flow,
 Crooning soft and low,
 Gliding, gliding to the sea,
Like Time to broad Eternity ;
 And, from its breast,
The startled whirr and cry of wildfowl from its nest,
 Disturbed from rest ;
 The Ocean's changeful song,
Now low and sweet, now deep and strong—
Oft waking in an angry mood
 In tempest rude,
Oft wantoning among the scattered shingle,
 Where wild waves laugh
 And idly chaff,
Till all come dancing in and break and mingle ;
 The watch-dog's honest bark ;
The hearty cheer of chanticleer ;
The cries of weary beasts, that shun
The face of man in desert dun
 And forest wild and dark ;
The thunder-bolt that shakes the ground ;

The strong glad voice of man—of all the sweetest sound !

 In these and other voices

 This planet-world rejoices,

And rolls, and rolls with merry rhyme

 Along its sphere,

And with a varied song sublime

 Still strives to cheer

The flight of Ages and the march of Time !

Dormant in Man—and not in Man alone—

There is another voice—a deeper tone—

 That lives and dies,

 And lives again ;

 A yearning, dim and strange—

That, pining, mourns, and, mourning, longs in vain

 For what's beyond the range

 Of aught we know on earth—

Then sleeps or dies—mysterious from its birth !

 'Tis in the seas and silent skies !

 'Tis in each star that there doth rise !

 In all things, small or great,

 Of high or low estate !

It rises deep and solemn from the breast

 Of brooding Nature, when at rest—

 Unheard by Man, and yet intense

 To some mysterious sense

 That lies within ;

A voice of pathos—pleading—as to win

An audience of Divine intelligence ;

 A mute appeal,

 Yet eloquent, it doth reveal

A spirit there, that in its fever, moans and sighs
For unknown remedies !
Thus lives and dies,
Yet ever lives again,
As tending to some higher plane,
This sweetly urgent Voice, of deep, pathetic pain
Beauty enhances Harmony,
And Harmony responds with equal glee,
Till both are interwoven in a sweeter dream !
Wherefore each common sight we see
Is linked to some sweet minstrelsy !
For oh ! the whole intricate scheme
Of Voicing Nature tends to Good,
To Good that knoweth no alloy !
Behold it in her every mood
Of Sorrow, Rage, or Joy !
And so, to this behoof,
The golden threads shall yet unwind
On Nature's loom.
The warp shall yet be woven with the woof—
The heavens their sweetest joys shall yet unbind,
To banish wretched Woe afar to his ancestral gloom.

R. J. T. Jefferson.

On the Kalahari.

ALL day the fiery-hearted sun,
With burning rays of heat intense,
Has scourged the desert, wild and dun ;
Nor stretched *one* shade from shrub or stone,
Where weariness could lay him down,
To shun his fierce offence !

The furious god, with strength amain,
With flaming brand, with shaft of fire,
Still smites the panting desert plain,
Whose muscles, nerve, and sinew strain
To spurn his vigour back again,
With furnace-breathing ire !

While zephyrs, trembling in affright,
With'ring beneath the awful blast,
Scarce dare attempt a fevered flight,
But inly pray for wished night
To flood the fulgent scene of blight,
And close the battle fast !

The hunter here shall careful tread
Across the blinding desert sheen ;
For here and there, in sandy bed,
There lurks the yellow cobra dread,
Or lifts his hooded, deadly head
With unexpected spleen.

The dusky adder rears his crest,
And, with a sudden measured stroke,
Darts on the Secretary's breast,
That dares his secret haunt molest ;
But soon those poisonous fangs shall rest
In death themselves provoke.

No singing bird is in the land !
Nor haunt of man, nor scattered farm,
No fierce, marauding Kafir band,
With war-song booming o'er the sand,
Shall sound the dread alarm !

But wandering Bushman lonely glide,
Exulting in his desert air ;
Whose pigmy form, with antic stride,
His nimble-footed drudge beside,
Still drums his shield of toughened hide
Across the lion's lair.

And rav'ning beast and bird of prey,
The gaunt retainers of the wild,
Afar perceive the welt'ring clay—
The fleet gazelle, in hopeless play,
Fall in the gorging lion's way,
The desert's royal child.

The vulture, soaring overhead,
With gurgling, gutt'ral-throated cry,
By instinct taught, or habit led,
In aerial circles, spiral-spread,
Winds upward, on ethereal thread,
His prey afar to spy.

The fitful whirlwind, eddying past,
Startles a herd of wild springbok,
Who spread their tails and sniff the blast,
Then bounding o'er the desert vast,
Speed like the whirlwind, hurrying fast,
As from an earthquake's shock.

Then all is stillness ! sky and sand
Stretch waste and lonely, bleak and nude ;
The wide rotundity around
Yields scarce a breath, and not a sound—
A spell has fallen on the land,
The charm of solitude.

The golden glory of the Sun,
As far athwart the arid plain
His beams are fading one by one,
Sinks low behind the desert dun,
And leaves this waste, that Man would shun,
A desolate domain.

Those fleecy clouds that shone so white
Ere he descended to his rest,
Now glow with splendours wondrous bright—
Green, gold, and sapphire's richest light,
That change their hues and fade as night
Throws shadows in the west.

So sinks the warrior, faint and gory,
And trails a lustre to his rest ;
So sank old Egypt, worn and hoary,
And left behind, in name and story,
A trail, a splendour, and a glory
That lingers in the West.

Then softly glides the moon, whose bright
Unclouded beams in splendour reign,
And golden stars with dreamy light
Fill all the deep, the fiery night,
Like locusts in celestial flight
Across the boundless plain.

Now Evening—like a lover's song,
Elate with passion, joy, and pow'r—
Comes stealing gradually along :
The pregnant mind, composed and strong,
Aglow with thoughts that burn and throng,
Is tempered to the hour ;

Till silent, soft, I hear the praise
Of Nature's universal hymn !
So sweet a song nor music plays,
Nor falling waters ever raise,
Nor is it heard in earthly lays—
Mysterious and dim !

A strain of heavenly music lies
In all God's universal plan !
From this great world its chords arise—
It lives, it breathes, it clings, it dies !
It echoes in the stars ; it sighs
Deep in the soul of Man.

All soundlessly its notes may steal,
All silently may upward rise,
Yet Harmony would nought conceal,
And still some secret sense can feel
Soft music, like an organ's peal,
Ascending to the skies.

And in this dream of solitude

The flame of feeling brighter glows ;
No sin, no sorrow shall intrude
Upon the charm of Nature's mood ;
But Thought, in silence, here shall brood,
And Passion know repose.

R. J. T. Jefferson.

The Salt of the Earth.

THE Jews, as every one admits,
Are all you say, Rabinowitz :
The noblest and the best of races,
Whose kindly hearts belie their faces.
They've made in music, art, and letters
The nations of the world their debtors ;
Who can deny it, when they own
A Heine and a Mendelssohn ;
Or, in the realm of thought and prose, a
Colossal genius like Spinoza ;
Nay—proudest boast of all their nation—
Freemantle as a blood relation ?

Then in the Law their work we see :
The Sabbath and the I.D.B. ;
In politics, who greater than
Their Beaconsfield or Lieberman ?
They'd give the warlike Togo tips
In floating mines and sinking ships ;
In fact, there are not any flies
Upon their business enterprise.

All this, my dear Rabinowitz,
 The world, as I have said, admits ;
 In metaphor to state their worth,
 " The salt," I'll call them, " of the earth."
 Of this same salt I'd like to tell
 A useful little parable.

In Scotland, as you know,—or should,—
 Where porridge is the staple food,
 They " sup them "—*vide* Scott or Galt—
 With no concomitant but salt.
 (The Southron, poor, misguided soul,
 Puts sugar in his porridge bowl.)
 Well, the good people of my tale,
 Who lived on porridge, scones, and kail,
 Had but one maid to wait and cook—
 A slattern, grimy as the " crook " ;
 A " fushionless " and " feckless " creature,
 Without one grace of mind or feature.

Now, one " braw morn " the lass forgot
 " Tae pit the sawt intil the pot."
 In consequence, the breakfast-table
 Was turned into a Tower of Babel ;
 The " big anes " " girmed," the " wee anes "
 " grat,"
 The " guid-wife " tasted " them " and " spat,"
 And (this sad fact I state with pain)
 The " guidman " " took his name in vain ! "

Next morning, going to the byre,
 The farmer passed the kitchen fire ;

He saw the porridge on the crook,
The salt-box in the chimney-nook
(The servant lassie wasn't nigh,
She'd gone outside to milk the " kye ").
" I'll hae no cause again to sin,"
He said, and dropped a handful in.
The farmer's daughter next came through—
She dropped a little salt in too ;
The farmer's wife, the farmer's son,
These also did as those had done ;
Lastly, the servant-girl came back—
" I'll teach them I can parritch mak' ! "
With her left hand the salt she shook,
And in her right the " spurtle " took.

The lassie brought the porridge " ben "
With conscious rectitude, and then,
With folded hands and pious face,
The farmer rose and said the grace,
Next tucked a napkin 'neath his chin,
And all were ready to begin.

What followed next I will not state,
It is too painful to relate ;
But this they all agreed upon :
That too much salt is worse than none.

Jan D. Colvin.

Elegy on a City Churchyard.

DUSTY, neglected quarter of the dead !
Upon whose half-obliterated stones
From year to year no mourning tear is shed,
Whose monuments are crumbling with their bones,
And death himself has fled
To find new habitations more remote,
Thine end is near, for even graveyards die,
And mine, the only tributary sigh,
Poor unregretted victim of a vote !

Memento mori to the city clerk
In his diurnal journeys on the car ;
The trysting-place of tabbies after dark,
Scene of fierce love and unmelodious war ;
The temporary ark
Of some poor tattered Romeo down at heel,
Who shelters in thy " detestable maw "
From the more real terrors of the law
And colder welcomes of the ne'er-do-weel.

And in the spring, when the geranium throws
A flush of scarlet on the dismal scene,
In white and gold the arum lily grows,
The dingy cyprus takes a livelier green,
The yellow cactus blows,
Then young invaders clamber from the street
To snatch the fragrant harvests of the grave,
Till, spite of best endeavours to be brave,
They scatter in precipitate retreat.

But, save for these rash visitants, thy ways
Are all untrodden, and the sculptured fane
Flaunts to the desert air its empty praise,
And all thy flattering epitaphs are vain,

 No need for weather stain
To blot inscriptions that are never read !
None cares to know who lies beneath the stone,
Whether it be a Darby or a Joan,
Or whether Brown or Robinson be dead.

Yet these unmarked *Hic Jacets* are the sign
That some once breathing pinch of valiant clay,
With thoughts and feelings just like yours or mine,
Hoped, loved, and hated in his little day,

 Danced, courted, and drank wine,
Played cards, backed horses, even as you or I,
Engaged in every whirling chance of life,
Schemed to win wealth or pleasure or a wife—
Poor devil ! never dreaming he would die !

Commingled in this mortal dust-heap lies
Another Cape Town, huddled layer on layer,
Inextricably mixed—the fools, the wise,
The rich, the poor, the beggar, and the Mayor.

 Grey hairs and beauty's eyes !
Whate'er they were they came to the same end ;
And we must follow in a little while
Like answered letters stuck upon a file
And docketed by some officious friend !

Jan D. Colvin.

Holy Jamie's Prayer.

(With apologies to the shade of Burns.)

O LORD, Thou'st gi'en me gear an' gold ;
Wherever I hae bocht an' sold
Thou'st heapit profits manifold :
 To Thee the glory !
So twa three maitters I mak' bold
 To lay afore Ye.

Thou kenst I'm piously inclined ;
That gift o' land Thou'lt ca' to mind—
I've got the contract a'most signed
 To big a store
(Virtue and profit are combined)
 Just by the door.

Twa vessels o' Thy chosen nation
Have aye enjoyed Thine approbation
(The ither Jamie is a caution !
 He dings us a') ;
Thou'st raised us to our lofty station,
 We dinna crawl.

Canty and croose we pu'd thegither,
Workin' as brither works wi' brither,
We even trusted one anither—
 Or verra near ;
To help oorsels ilk helped the tither,
 An' didna spier.

An' a' oor doin's, wrang or right,
Have aye fand favour in Thy sight :

Noo I'm a laird an' he's a knight.

But still a drappie

Add to my cup, for I'm no quite

Completely happy.

Thou kenst I'm noo an M.L.C.,

I signed the pledge, an' I agree

The Bible reprobates a lee ;

But after a',

Sic a sma' thing 'twixt You an' me

Is nocht ava !

I canna' thole the Doctor's¹ way,

He treats me as inferior clay ;

He'll neither daff wi' me nor play

A game o' cartes :

O Lord, confound and blast, I pray,

His takin' arts !

Forbye, they didna' treat me fair :

That railway business fashed me sair,

An' the Excise on drink was mair

Than I could stan'—

Thou kenst I had a muckle store

O' dop on han'.

The Party I wud like to wreck,

An' wring the sneering Doctor's neck.

Guide me, I pray, to this effec',

Is my petition,

An' troth, I'll gie a thumpin' cheque

Tae Kirk or Mission !

Jan D. Colvin.

¹ Doctor Jameson—one time Premier, Cape Colony.

A Museum Idyll.

READER, when you've wandered o'er
The dim Museum's cumbered floor,
And seen the grim and ghastly shapes,
As skeletons of men and apes,
Scorpions' tails and serpents' skins ;
Nightmare beetles stuck on pins ;
Stalactites and fossils all
Ranged in cases on the wall ;
Corals, sponges, and the weeds
The silent floor of ocean breeds ;
And the reptiles of the prime
That floundered in creation's slime ;
Bushmen's skulls and meteorites,
And all such weird and uncouth sights—
Have you never longed to see
Some relic of Humanity—
Something that would bring to mind
The form and vesture of Mankind,
Something with the bloom and scent
Of sweet human sentiment ?
Seek, then, the doorway where one sees
" Colonial Antiquities."
There the cabinets and walls
Sparkle with antique bocala,
Dresden shepherdesses fair,
Old blue Delft and priceless ware
Brought by Dutch East Indiaman
From the ports of old Japan.

Diaz's croziered pillar there
Stands by wicked Van Noodt's chair,
And the plate that graced his board
Is guarded by Van Riebeck's sword.
Near, an old bronze Buddhist bell
Graven with an Eastern spell—
With its *Mane padme om* ;
Near, a Chinese ivory comb ;
Near, an idol grinning white
Cased in ocean stalactite,
Which has suffered a sea-change
Into something rich and strange ;
Near, a grim, terrific god ;
Near, a teapot with an odd
Chinese dragon trailing round
Golden folds on copper ground.
There's a tiny English shoe
Of Morocco, cream and blue,
Made with all a cobbler's skill
By " Sam Miller in Cornhill."
Nothing more the legend says ;
But I, in love with bygone days,
Look until I hear it tell
(Like a murmur in a shell)
Many a story quaint and sweet
Of the lady fair whose feet
Twinkled with a charm divine
Beneath her ample crinoline,
Making her tortured lovers dream
That heaven itself was blue and cream.

As down the Heerengracht she went

Each hat was doffed, each head was bent ;
Envied the slave who held the red
Umbrella o'er her queenly head !
Envied the mastiff on whose back
One fair and slender hand lay slack !
Even the Fiscal pressed his hat
With fervour 'gainst his laced cravat,
And swept the pavement with a bow
Before the lovely Jonge-vrouw.

When Swellengrebel gave a ball,
He led her foremost down the hall ;
Her lightest word or look was law
At picnic or at Wapenschaw ;
In church, distracted beaux gave scant
Attention to the Predikant,
But read their sermon in the smile
That shone like sunshine down the aisle ;
And once at least upon the lawn
Beneath the Castle walls at dawn
Hard breathing men with sword to sword
Tramped a circle on the sward,
Athirst to make a rival feel
The cruel chastisement of steel.

But now, I prithee, tell me, Muse,
How came she to wear English shoes ?

An English ship one summer day
Let fall her anchor in the Bay,
Answered the Castle gun for gun—
The *Walpole* or the *Addison*,

Laden with sandalwood and spice,
And other goodly merchandise.
Ah ! how the crew praised God to see
The welcome green of grass and tree ;
And, oh, how pleasant was the sight
Of shady streets and houses white !

A boat was manned, and brought a score
Or so of invalids ashore ;
With fever pale, with scurvy black,
Or yellow with the Yellow Jack.
Some went where by the old canal
Stood Van der Stel's sick hospital ;
But one, of gentle birth and mien,
Was by the lady's father seen,
And lodged and nursed a month or so
Within their house in Bromner's Row.
(Old English travellers agree
To praise Cape hospitality.)
She nourished him with jellies fine,
Custards and rich Constantia wine ;
And when he went to take the air,
She used to walk beside his chair.

He told her stories of the East,
Of savage man and savage beast ;
Of palms that waved o'er coral isles,
And rivers full of crocodiles ;
Of marble tombs with gems inwrought,
And sacrificial Juggernaut ;
Of jewelled Begums and Bashaws,
Rodgers, Nabobs, and Sabberdaws ;

Of pirate Angria and the fray
'Twixt Great Mogul and Grand Sedey ;
Of Hindoo widows burnt alive,
And how he'd fought the French with Clive ;
He watched her cheek go red and pale—
The light and shadow of his tale—
And on her eyelid shining clear
The crystal candour of a tear.

Ah, gentle reader, need I tell
The story that you know so well—
Of tender looks and stifled sighs,
Of ardent vows and soft replies ?
It is, I think, enough to say
They loved as lovers love to-day,
And in the way of lovers swore
That no one ever loved before.
For centuries may come and go,
But Love and Youth are always so.
Nor need I rend your hearts to tell
The passion of their sad farewell.
But he, a moment to beguile
The April sunshine of a smile,
Asked for her choice 'twixt hat and gown,
A gift to bring from London Town ;
And she, although her cheeks were wet, .
Was in a moment all coquette—
“ Your English fashions would, I fear,
But ill become my homely sphere ;
Besides, you know not how to choose ;
Bring me instead a pair of shoes.”

With leaden feet the days passed o'er
The maid who watched upon the shore ;
A piteous calendar, her cheeks
Grew paler with the passing weeks.
Her father marked the absent mood,
The tears, the pensive attitude ;
And with affection's swift surmise
He guessed the reason of her sighs,
And tried to lock the stable door
(As parents oft had done before).
" A husband," to himself he said,
" Will drive this nonsense from her head."
But which fond suitor should he bless ?
'Twas an *embarras de richesse*
'Twixt Van de Merwe, Jacques Theron,
The Captain of the Garrison,
Petrus de Witt, or Van Breda,
Or Cloete of Constantia.
And then the Fiscal—fat and old—
What matter ? he had power and gold,
A farmstead bowered in oak and vine,
The fairest in the Drakenstein ;
Coffers of dollars and doubloons,
Gold mohurs, pagodas, ducatoons ;
And in his cupboards, stored away,
The priceless treasures of Cathay.

Straight to the Fiscal's house he went,
Nor paused to ask the girl's consent ;
Arranged the match without delay,
Drew up the deeds and named the day.
In vain the tears that fell like rain—

The prayers, the protests all in vain.
The Fiscal forced a loathed caress
With elephantine playfulness.

'Twas now a twelvemonth since the day
Her English lover sailed away,
And 'neath the garden oaks, forlorn,
A week before the wedding morn,
She sat—a book upon her knee—
Alone in pensive reverie.

The menace of the old bridegroom
Was dreadful as an open tomb.
It yawned so imminently near,
Poor dove, she sickened with the fear !
“ My heart has called so loud,” she said,
“ He must come if he be not dead ! ”

A sudden step—a look—a cry—
“ 'Tis thou ! ” and, with a kiss, “ 'Tis I ! ”
“ See, I have brought thy English shoes !
Saidst thou I knew not how to choose ?
These for thy feet—this golden band
Will grace the whiteness of thy hand ! ”

From Signal Hill to Wittebloem,
From Kirstenbosch to Roodebloem,
With cannon, bugle, bell and horn,
They ushered in the wedding morn.
The Fiscal went with stately stride
To wish good-morrow to his bride ;

But he was greeted with a groan—
Alack ! alack ! the bird had flown.

Far out beneath a cloud of sail,
A ship bowed to the favouring gale.
They heard above the ocean swell,
Ring faint but clear a wedding bell,
And where the boat put off they found
A tiny shoe upon the ground.

As scent of faded rose-leaves dead
With dreams of summer fills the head,
As the faint murmurs in a shell
Of green foam-crested surges tell,
So this forgotten little shoe
Told me the tale I've told to you.

Jan D. Colvin.

A Slumber Song of the Public Gardens, Cape Town.

*"I'se gwine home to Dixie,
I'se gwine no more to wander."*

—OLD PLANTATION SONG.

SOFT haze upon the mountain and a haze upon the sea,
High noon above the Gardens and shadows on the
way ;

And twenty weary people slipping out of time awee,—
Out of time and out of trouble, on a hot midsummer's
day.

Blow softly, silver trumpets, in a fairy serenade,
Ye lilies of St. Joseph, swinging lightly over-head.

In the shadows of the Gardens the wearied come to rest,
In the spacious dusk and quiet the fevered blood is
stilled ;

While sleep, on tiptoe stepping, lays aside the hopeless
quest,

Takes away the fag of travel and the promise un-
fulfilled ;

In white and gold and purple the wondrous petals
gleam ;

In white and gold and purple is the wondrous slope of
dream.

Here be ever Jew and Gentile, Briton, German, Dago,
Pole,—

Mostly young and mostly reckless, some unkempt
or liquor-stained ;

Here and there a grizzled hobo, or be-painted, draggled
troll ;

Here and there an eager seeker for the labour yet
ungained ;

Not alone for rank or station may Titania's maidens
bring

Happy dreams of happy Dixie to the people slumbering.

Here's a lad—and ne'er a razor licked the smoothness
of his chin,—

Curly-headed, slim and supple, coiled within a corner
seat,

Worn at heel, and frayed at elbow, blistered foot, and
roughened skin—

God ! how far we have to wander for a little bread to
eat !

Puck, who puts on mortal eyelids filmy cobwebs, hither,
quick !

Take the boy across the water, he is ill or mammy-sick.

Fires of life among your ashes, what have ye to give or
gain,

In that haggard shell and ancient, snoring on with
mouth agape ?

What among your outworn pleasures hold ye now, and
what remain,

Heartsome still,—a rank old cutty and a little juice
of grape ?

Still with these a man may travel to the last foot-weary
mile,

Halting for a dream of Dixie in the garden depths
awhile.

In the mine's untrammelled shanty or Johannesburg
cabouse,

O'er the cards and vicious whisky, men may query in
a jest,

How she struck the trail to Cape Town in her paint and
lacquered shoes,

With her skirts' pathetic draggle, hopeless, weary
like the rest,

Here, within the pure bright Gardens, let the fairy folk
undo

What the mortal folk have made her, for a blissful hour
or two.

Evermore through sun and shadow wafting down upon
the grass,

Takes the dreamers back to Dixie—wheresoever that
may be,—

To the lost hearth and the mother, to the lost youth
and the lass,

Over all the plains and mountains, over all the
leagues of sea :

All roads but lead to quiet, though the heat and noise
be long,—

Grace for the sleepers, by your leave, and this their
slumber song !

John Runcie.

Van Riebeck.¹

MAYHAP it was the Lady Moon,
Or that dream-laden opiate
“Magaliesberg,” when hours were late,
And wakeful crickets shrilled their tune ;

Or maybe 'twas the soul of grape,
That as the eve of Christmas drew
To Christmas morning, woke anew
The old-world shadows of the Cape.

I saw Van Riebeck standing near,
In leathern jerkin, sword in hand ;
His boat was beached upon the sand,
And three sea-lights were burning clear.

A little man he seemed to me,
Thick-set and firm and keenly-eyed,
Broad-belted, gloved, and hatted wide,
With buckled shoe and hosened knee.

Like one who, musing, seemed to know
The fancies thronging through the mind,
He answered what my glance defined,
With that quaint grace of long ago :—

“Lo, ye have built your city white
Where once a little fort was raised,
And where the lumbering zeekoe grazed
Your Noël carols ring to-night.

¹ Van Riebeck—one of the earliest Dutch Governors of the Cape.

“ And where a day’s march could not span,
A little hour will set you down
In comfort in your Simon’s Town,
Without a fear for beast or man.

“ From here to yon far river’s flow
Your Royal flag is floating free ;
’Twas Cromwell’s flag we met at sea,
When Tromp and Blake fought long ago.

“ How far anon your way may bend,
The Book of Fate alone foretells ;
Mayhap your steel-drawn parallels
Will bind these countries end to end.

“ How far ye go in days to be,
I know not ; but in days gone by,
Behold ! the light in yon dark sky
Was kindled by our folk and me.

“ Ye may forget ! In this large day
What boots a little fort or kraal,
With teeming street and window’d wall,
And crowded wharves of Table Bay ?

“ But this I say, and this I know,
Whatever scribes may think or write,—
Behold, behind one man is Night,
And from one man the Tale must flow.”

And then he passed. The Bay was bright
With riding lights, but like a smoke
Three high-pooped ships in canvas broke,
And drifted swiftly out of sight.

John Runcie.

Crossing the Hex Mountains.

AT Tweefontein in the moonlight the little white tents
shine,
And a cry comes out of the darkness from those who
guard the line ;
The panting heart of the engine pulsed through the
resting cars,
And beyond are the quiet mountains, and above are
the quiet stars.

Sinister rise the mountains, jagged and bleak and bare,
Cloven and rent and fissured by fire and torrent there ;
But the moon is a tender lady that loves not sights like
these,
And in her spell transfigured, all things must soothe
and please.

Far on the veldt behind us shone the steel-drawn
parallels,
And beneath was the famished river fed by the famished
wells,
And behind the shuttered windows, and beneath the
hooded light,
Folk in the train were sleeping through all the wondrous
night.

But I was out on the platform waiting the whistle shrill
That would break in a lustre of echoes right on the face
of the hill ;

Break on the face of the mountain and lose themselves
in the pass,
Where the rails are like threads of silver, and the
boulders smooth as glass.

Forth with the grinding of couplings, the hissing and
snorting of steam,
Till the rails spun out behind her like spider-threads
agleam,
Till she roared at the foot of the mountain, and
brawled through the echoing glen,
Roaring, rocking, and ringing out her pæan of conquer-
ing men.

Right to the edge of a boulder, ominous, big, and
black ;
Plucking our hearts to our parching throats with fear
for the open track ;
Then forth like a driving piston straight from its iron
sheath,
Till the wind stormed down on our faces, and we could
not see nor breathe.

Looping, climbing, and falling, panting and swooping
she sped,
Like a snake at the foot of the mountain, with her
great white lamp ahead ;
Shouldering the heavy gradients, heedless of breathing
spells,
And racing away like a maddened steed down the
sloping parallels.

Then out of De Dóorns she thundered, and over the
starved Karoo,
Dwindling the hills behind her, farther and farther she
flew ;
And I know not which to praise the more—these moon-
shot hills of God,
Or the genius of the men who planned and made the
glorious road.

John Runcie.

The Veldt Folk

In these great spaces they abide for ever,
Nor may they hive in cities even as we,
Whose toil from crowded shire and teeming river
Finds markets over-sea.

Nor they, like Israel whom the Lord befriended,
With flock and herd and bountiful increase,
Were searched by war, that so when war was ended,
All men might dwell in peace.

Upon their lives the sun and moon slow-swinging,
Through days and years o'er vast, untroubled skies,
Have wrought an affluent peace, a love fast-clinging
To freedom large and wise.

By narrow laws we judge the farmer people,
Whose larger outlook we would fain gainsay,
Even as we fain would coop beneath a steeple
The God to whom we pray.

God gave the Law in lightning and in thunder,
To that lost nation bann'd and unredeemed,—
A pastoral people, whom He swept asunder
Because of Baal they dreamed.

Even so to these, the Veldt Folk, God hath given
The near communion in His Temple vast,
Wherein He speaketh yet, in awful levin,
And in the thunder blast.

We judge by roaring loom and crowded harbour,
By teeming street and plenteous gear and gold,
Where Greatness dwells ; and yet within an arbour
Sits Wisdom as of old.

All men conserve their Faith who, dwelling lonely
In those vast breadths of kopje, stream, and plain,
Fulfil their happiness by reason only
That wealth to them is vain ;—

That wealth is vain, and Freedom more than cattle ;
Ay, more than life, as when in troubled shires,
Of old were gathered up to awful battle
Our own victorious sires.

John Runcie.

The Hogsback Peak.¹

I.

O HOARY monarch, rough and rude,
Rising above thy vassal hills,
Far from the music of the rills,
The very son of Solitude !
Far, far above the 'wildering ways
Where flow the chequered streams of life,
In discords harsh of stress and strife,
Or suave in song of peace and praise.
No verdure decks thy rocky head,
No flowers bloom around thy crest—
Thou'rt bare as the deserted nest
Of birds that o'er the seas have fled.
Only the golden buds of morn,
The roses of retreating eve,
And lily-mists serenely weave
Gay garlands round thy brows forlorn.
And when the weary world doth rest,
In shelt'ring night's secure embrace,
The moonbeams kiss thy mournful face,
The still stars sparkle round thy crest.

II.

The breezes blithe of deep-voiced spring
Whisper within thine ear sweet tales
Of musing woods and laughing vales,
Where brooklets babble, wild birds sing ;

¹ Hogsback Peak is one of the highest points in the Amatola range of mountains.

But pale the pleasure they impart,
For lo, they sing of alien themes ;
Spring's subtle tremors, magic dreams,
Ne'er come to gladden thy sad heart :
But barrenness for ever flings
Around thy brows her pallid shroud,
And silence holds thee like a cloud,
And thou art loneliest of things !
Like to a soul that doth possess
No kin in others, but each day
It wears itself in grief away
At its own utter loneliness !

III.

Art thou not weary, full of woe,
Old sentinel, whose stony eyes
Have watched the sleepless centuries
Unhasting, silent come and go ?
Thou seest still from year to year
The strange transitions of the earth,
Grave Autumn's prime, and Springtide's birth,
Replete Summer, Winter bare ;
And men and nations hast thou seen
Flourish awhile and have their day—
Like Spring's frail flow'rs they pass away,
And leave no trace of having been.
But thou remainest : changeless still,
Patient and peaceful, while above
The glad sky smiles on thee with love—
And thou art blest, O lonely hill !

F. C. Slater.

In the Matoppos.

IN lone Matoppos now he lies,
Can we forget ?
Our leader, seer ; his hills, his skies
Are near him yet !
Like to the Hebrew seer of old,
Who, within sight
Of promised Canaan, passed away
On Nebo's height—
So he : he only saw the dawn
Of promised day
Break o'er the hills of his lov'd land :
He might not stay
To see the splendour of that noon,
For which he wrought
Thro' the long, weary, waiting years
With anxious thought.
Strange to our purblind eyes the tools
Which, with due care,
The great Inventor takes to build
His Kingdom here.
He sought to further the strong sway
Of Britain's Isle,
But all unconsciously for God
He wrought the while.
In lone Matoppos now he lies,
Our leader, seer ;
His hills, his woods, his streams, his skies
Are ever near !

F. C. Slater.

In the Maize Field.

*Kaffir woman, her babe bound to her back, sings as
she hoes :*

THE sun's flail threshes the maize fields,

The heat-chaff ¹ flickers and stings ;

Songless and still in the branches

The birds droop listless wings.

The sun lashes the maize fields ;

O for a cooling breeze !

The birds are still in the branches,

The cattle are under the trees.

Up in the kraal on the hillside

Thy father drowsily lies,

Quaffing the honeyed *qilika*,²

Cursing the troublesome flies.

Thy father sleeps, while thy mother,

Beneath the sun's white blaze,

Toils from day-dawn to darkness,

Hoeing the shimmering maize.

Umfundisi ³ tells us that somewhere

There lies a region of Rest :

Shall we go seek for it, *Nyana*,⁴

This country of the Blest ?

No maize fields there for hoeing,

No sun with scorching heat ;

And they who seek shall find it,

And find it passing sweet.

F. C. Slater.

¹ Heat-waves somewhat resembling chaff rising from a threshing-floor.

² Beer made from honey.

³ Teacher or preacher.

⁴ Son.

“ Lala, 'Sana Lwam ! ”

(*Kaffir Lullaby Song.*)

THE hoeing of day is done,
The weary heat of the sun,
The wood is gathered, the water drawn,
And now we can rest
Till the coming of dawn ;
Till the coming of dawn, my babe.
Lala, lala, 'mtwana wam ;
Lala, 'sana lwam ! ¹

O soothing season of night !
Bringing a respite sweet
To aching hands and weary feet,
From the burden of toil
And the sting of the heat ;
O soothing season of night !
Lala, lala, 'mtwana wam ;
Lala, 'sana lwam !

Calm and fair is the night,
The moon shines over the hill,
Flooding with magical light
Forest and field and rill.
All is peaceful and still,
Save the hungry jackal's howl.
Calm and fair is the night,
The moon shines over the hill.
Lala, lala, 'mtwana wam ;
Lala, 'sana lwam ! *F. C. Slater.*

¹ Sleep, sleep, my child ;
Sleep, my babe.

“'Zani 'Nkomo.”

Kaffir herd-boy sings:—

BRIGHT blooms the sun on the grass-clad meadow,
Bright blooms the sun in the fern-fond rill ;
Sun-rays dart thro' the dream-haunted woodland,
Sunbeams laugh on valley and hill.

'Zani 'nkomo,¹ *whee-ou-who*, come along my cattle ;
Whee-ou-who, come to the green hillside ;
Linger as ye list in cool, quiet grass-glades,
From white morn to wan eventide.

Deep in the dim woods I'll wander thro' the daytime,
Feasting on honey and juicy roots ;
Happy as a hill-cloud I'll wander thro' the woodlands,
Feasting at will on wild-wood fruits.

'Zani 'nkomo, *whee-ou-who*, with my dog and *gqudu*,²
Swift thro' the woods will I chase the birds that fly ;
Swift thro' the woods will I hunt the nimble 'mpunzi,³
All thro' the day till night draws nigh.

Slow sinks the sun on cloud-claspt hill-tops,
Still shadows creep from the nest of night ;
Slow sinks the sun, and only on the hill-tops
Now may be seen the lilies of night.

'Zani 'nkomo, *whee-ou-who*, come along, my cattle ;
Swift to *ub'hlangi*,⁴ milking-time has come.
'Zani 'nkomo, *whee-ou-who*, come on, my cattle ;
Come along, dear ones, come on home.

F. C. Slater.

¹ Come, cattle.

² Stick with knob.

³ A species of antelope.

⁴ Cattle enclosure.

The Palace of Poesy.

ONCE on a blithe, blue morn in sun-lov'd Spring,
I laid me down beneath a whispering tree
Whereon the little birds did sweetly sing ;

Hard by, a shade-fleck'd streamlet babbled free,
As its swift course it onward still did wing
To mingle in the music of the sea.

The snowy cloudlets o'er the smiling deep
Of heaven serenely wandered to and fro,
As o'er the meadows stray a flock of sheep,

As thoughts that thro' the brain their shadows throw ;
The young spring winds did thro' the forest creep,
Laden with sweet perfumes, and murmurs low.

These pleasant sounds and odours did combine
To lull my senses, and soft sleep did steal
My soul into her shadowy lands divine.

I dream'd I stood upon a headland tall,
Beside the olden, many-voiced ocean :
The sun's glad rays were flashing over all,—

With suave puissance, and with rhythmic motion,
The billows lashed the adamantine wall
Of the rude, rocky shores ; and from that Ocean

There rose a stately mountain dark and blue,
On whose far peak there shone a palace fair—
A wondrous sight ! And as I gazed there flew

From the gemm'd porches of that palace rare
Some god or angel with a golden lyre,
And, sailing into the pellucid air,

He sang to me and set my soul on fire !—
“ O dreamer, wouldst thou scale the summit where
Yon palace stands ? If this be thy desire

“ Thy task is great, for at thy feet there flows
The mighty Sea of Knowledge, thro' whose deep
Thy path shall lie,—for only he who knows

“ May hope to climb yon silent dizzy steep
Of thought sublime, on whose far peak there glows
The palace where sweet Poesy doth keep

“ Her daughters fair, the sweet-voiced Muses Nine.”
And when the voice was still I strove to speak,
And faltering said : “ O son of Song divine,

“ Pray tell me how shall one so mean and weak
In knowledge, and with shallow thought like mine,
E'er climb those heights that palace fair to seek ? ”

Lo ! as I spake a ghostly mist arose
And hid that fairy vision from my sight ;
Fled was the palace fair of flaming rose !

Faded that mountain steep, that ocean bright !
And ev'n as one bow'd down with nameless woes
I sighed and wept in sorrow infinite.

And as I wept swift changed was the scene,—
And far away amidst the ancient hills,
Begirt with shadowy forests dark and green,

I sat and listened to the tinkling rills
Which rippled softly thro' the gloom and sheen
Of the still woods—a sound that ever fills

The mind with peaceful thought—and lo ! I heard
A voice serenely sweet, that bathed with light
Of hope renewed my languid life, and stirr'd

My inmost soul to visions pure and bright,—
A voice divine,—sweeter than song of bird,
Sweeter than the ringing of the foam-bell white

Upon the list'ning shore, or lone wind's sigh
Thro' echoing forests,—thus it spake to me :
“ Fear not, O dreamer ! not o'er mountains high

“ Of thought sublime, nor yet thro' the deep sea
Of knowledge doth Poesy's Palace lie ;
But in the plains of Life, where live and die

“ Mankind, in joy and sorrow, smiles and tears,
In aspirations great, in longings vain,
In strife and sin, in gloomy doubts and fears ;

“ Yea, dreamer, down in life’s great sombre plain
The Muses dwell, for song was truly made
To soothe life’s sorrows and relieve its pain !

“ Therefore be not cast down nor yet afraid,
For if in singing thou dost ever strive
To comfort fellow-travellers thro’ life’s glade,

“ To cheer them on, their failing hopes revive
With the glad tinkle of thy simple lays,
Thine efforts shall be blest ; thy songs survive

“ In some fond hearts. But ne’er let human praise
Be goal to which thine inmost hopes aspire ;
Be as the brooklet that thro’ lonely ways

“ Unconscious pours its treasure : no desire
Of praise or glory prompts its generous will ;
Let music of thy soul attune thy lyre,—

“ For, only songs born of the authentic thrill
Of soul-pulsations truly reach the soul
Of man, and there strike answering chords.”

F. C. Slater.

Love Vows.

I WOULD I were a mailèd knight,
A mailèd knight and bold ;
To battle for my lady bright,
And honour's crown of gold.
But tho' I forged thro' many a fight,
And conquered foes untold,—
My sweet, my dear, by heaven I swear
This solemn vow :
My love for you were not more true
Than now.

I would I were a bard of fame,
A bard with laurel crown'd ;
With great acclaim, my lady's name
The world to sing around.
But tho' your praise in loving lays
I sang till earth resound,
My sweet, my dear, by heaven I swear
This solemn vow :
My love for you were not more true
Than now.

F. C. Slater.

Sonnet : Flowers.

ROSES I saw, and poppies all alight
With colours of the dawn, and rainbow hues
Drawn from the sun and all the secret dews
Distilled upon them from the brooding night,
And delicate sweet-peas so purely dight
They must have grown where icy winds refuse
To blow, or haply where nuns dream and muse
In holy meditation, out of sight
Of the rough world ;—flowers of moonlight sheen
And golden hearts, and velvet pansies turned
The room they stood in to a garden scene
Of loveliness so exquisite, I yearned
Through all my soul to be as chaste and clean
As these, and more my raptured eye discerned.

Herbert Price.

Drought.

Lo ! all the land is dry and parched with heat,
And all the hills are white with withered grass
That hath no touch of greenness ; and, alas !
See how the lately waving fields of wheat
Droop wearily towards a sure defeat
Before the scorching winds that hourly pass
Over the arid earth ; how like a glass
The hot flats shimmer underneath the beat,
More strenuous as the stifling weeks increase,

Of quenchless and immitigable rays,
That make a terror of the rainless days ;
And the clear vault of fire, that will not cease
To heap with death the long and dusty ways,
And burn out life from all the leafless trees.

Herbert Price.

Cloudland.

SLOW mists were on the ridges all around,
And in the kloofs ; and on the mountain side
They moved and swayed, a softly flowing tide
That rose against the rocks without a sound,
Then circled back upon the lower ground
In folding mazes that would not abide
A moment there, but wandered far and wide
In billowy waves no shores were set to bound.

Our raptured souls were in that magic sea,
And in those wreaths that journeyed with the wind
Were all our thoughts, and in each eager mind
The beauty of that morning mystery
Became an exultation, yet to be
Remembered when our mortal eyes are blind.

Herbert Price.

The Mountain Top.

WHAT witching hours of wild delight are here !
What amplitude of healing airs that sweep
Downward to rouse the dreamers from their sleep
Far in unhealthful valleys ! and what cheer
Of gleeful laughter wins the soul from fear
To gambol on these lusty heights like sheep
Glad with the spring ! In what still pools and deep
Shine spaces of the crystal atmosphere !
What flowers are here ! what scented dells of shade !
What carols make the mornings musical !
What fragrant coils of everlastings glow
In secret spots along each sinuous glade !
What luminous waters rush and pause to fall !
What exultations through the spirit flow !

Herbert Price.

Quatrains.

I.

CLOSE not thy lids on idle dreams,
O voyaging soul aghast !
Safe through the mazes of life's streams
No dreamer ever passed.

II.

Who fails in his allotted march
To make one step for right,
Spoils the wide curve of heaven's arch,
And mars the infinite.

III.

The soul that dies by flesh o'erwon,
Is like some tender growth
On which a fetid adder coils,
And kills in folds of sloth.

IV.

Eagles mount on easy wing ;
Larks are light of feather ;
Man, the heavy-footed thing,
Adds stars and suns together.

V.

Beauty born of winds and suns,
Lithe strength of storms and showers,
She gathered nature's graces once
Who sleeps beneath the flowers.

VI.

The peaks that pierce the deepest blue
Though lofty, free, and still,
Shine with no light of quickening dew
Like lowly vale and hill.

VII.

Roses from polluted soil
Draw delicious odours forth,
So doth virtue's secret toil
Sweeten noisome dens of earth.

VIII.

The flower that on the arid rock
Shows all her rich attire,
Is like the face that smiles to mock
Fate's fell and fierce desire.

Herbert Price.

The First Dawn.

WHAT blackness reigned before a star was born,
When far across void spaces of the night
The pale diaphanous wonder of the dawn
Rose ghostlike on the unaccustomed sight
Of all the unimaginable eyes
(Strange creatures of the darkness sure were bred)
That stared towards the east in wild surmise,
To see the changing colours throb and spread,
Innumerable films of rosy fire
Flushing the orient with their glowing tints,
Clothing the haggard plains in rich attire,
And flashing from great hills of naked flints,
Until the gaunt and hungry earth displayed
The jewelled splendour of a queen arrayed.

Herbert Price.

When.

WHEN through the dark I hear the fall
Of waters low and musical,
When stars in wonder gaze and blink
On silver dews the roses drink,
When o'er the hills a veil of light
Comes softly flowing through the night,
Then æons of old Time appear
But tiny twinkles of a year.

When in a garden scented sweet
I loiter with reluctant feet,
And heart that loves the flowers so
They blush into a warmer glow,
Each breathing all its soul away
Into the fervid air of day,
Then birth, and life, and death assume
The fragrance of a sweet perfume.

When from a mountain top alone
I see the season's vernal zone
Stretch gleaming green o'er vale and hill,
When mists come up and slowly fill
The shaded hollows of the world,
And dreamy visions are unfurled,
Then all the universe to me
Is but a thought's epitome.

When from his bald and windy height
The eagle sweeps into the light,
And curving in majestic rings
Holds all the earth beneath his wings,
And from his azure vantage sees
The vast creation's mysteries,
Then all the sordid frets and schemes
Of men are but delusive dreams.

When all the hills like emeralds glow,
And winds in fragrant silence go,
Wafting from the valleys deep
Scents which there invite to sleep,

Herbert Price

But along the mountain side
With a wakeful spirit glide,
Then all the veins of life desire
The impulse of the season's fire.

When children in a joyous rout
Make all the hills together shout
With crystal echoes such as move
The very heavens to ache with love,
And hosts of flowers around their feet
Rejoice to be so bright and sweet,
Then all my soul is like the sky
When not a cloud is sailing by.

When on the ocean's moaning breast
I lie in wonder's heart arest,
And hear her cosmic music roll
As from some far and magic goal
Enchanted voices of applause
Float up from visionary shores,
Then all the waste and drift of things
Is covered by love's brooding wings.

When softly from the breathing earth
I see the grasses having birth,
When buds appear and flowers soon
Enrich the golden afternoon
With scents and colours sweet and bright
Till life is full of new delight,
Then hope, awakened from her dream,
Renews again her sheeny gleam.

Herbert Price.

Fate.

OUR fate is round us like a viewless net,
Woven of thoughts, inheritances, deeds,
And all the drift of circumstantial weeds
About the shores of being that are set,
Imponderable strands no mortal fret
Hath power to fray ; the inevitable seeds
Sown by the gods along the cosmic meads
(The gods who sow and never know regret)
Throw round us their invisible intents ;
Webs knitted in the house of destiny
Enmesh the yearning visage of the soul,
And though it cry, the sequence of events,
The march and order of the mighty whole
Remain unchanged through all eternity.

Herbert Price.

The Lion's Dream.

(An incident of the Zoo.)

Now he recalleth his triumphant days,
And fervid throes of equatorial fire
Thrill through his frame, till re-aroused desire
(His dream so shows him all his desert ways)
To lap the scented blood of what he slays,
Lifts him upon his feet ; a lurid ire
Burns in his eyes, a shaggy horror stays
His mane erect in aspect grim and dire.

His eyes that are the mirrors of his dream,
As slowly from their depths the vision fades
Lose all the light wherewith they blazed and shone,
His limbs relent, and all the savage gleam
Droops in his mane to ever gloomier shades,
And with his sleep his royal mood is gone.

Herbert Price.

The Broken Mast.

ONE morn in Spring, my love and I
Went down the hillside to the sea ;
We watched the sea-birds wheeling fly,
Wild as the waves are, and as free.
The water broke about our feet
And flung us many a fleet foam-feather ;
Ah, love, that day was passing sweet,
Spring, sea, and thou and I, together.
High stranded by some long-spent wave
The fragments of a shattered mast
We found, and straight our mood waxed grave
O'er unknown woes and dangers past.
We pictured Norway's pine-clad hills,
Where once this long-lost waif had stood,
Then sombre with late autumn's chills,
Ere Winter's word had stilled each flood.
We thought how, in some dockyard's bound,
The new ship's mast was deftly stept,
And how, 'mid acclamative sound,
The vessel to the water leapt ;

And how the helmsman sadly turned
The ship's head from the Polar Star
To where strange constellations burned
O'er lands from his loved home afar.

And how the stout ship stood the shock,
Perchance, of many a raging gale,
Till on some fatal shaft of rock,
She perished, 'mid the water's wail.

"Dear one," she said, "in future time,
When you and I are fast asleep ;
Some waif of ours, perchance this rhyme,
Time's waves upon Life's shore may keep.

"And lovers in their lives' sweet spring
Will read their story in our own,
And feel, as from a sea-bird's wing,
Light teardrops on their eyelids blown.

"When they, content, have lulled their bliss
To slumber light with painless sighs,
Before they wake it with a kiss,
They'll scan our thought with chastened eyes ;

"And e'en as this dead thing hath power
To lift from us Time's fallen veil,
Our song, like some dim book-pressed flower,
Will Life's lost perfume new exhale."

W. C. Scully.

The Nahoon.

WHERE the breath of the ocean encumbers
The air with its languorous balm,
And weaves o'er the forest that slumbers
The spell of its health-giving calm ;
There the spirit of Peace hath its dwelling,
And, rich round the wanderer's feet,
In the groves where clear waters are welling,
The dream-fragrant lotus blooms sweet.

The lagoon like a scimitar gleaming
In the conqueror ocean's strong hand,
Pierces through the bright hills that, a-dreaming,
Through seasons and centuries stand ;
Whilst the tide, with its message of greeting,
Sweeps up from the surf to the rills,
And the murmurous joy of their meeting
The valley with melody fills.

Here each season, like spring, is a revel
Of flower and sunshine and song,
And leads to the banquet its novel
Delights in a 'wilderling throng ;
As a pageant of beauty, with guerdon
Of richness to spirit and sense,
Come the days bearing hither their burden
Of sweets for the hours to dispense.

Down rocks that the lichen makes hoary,
The garlanded tendril-blooms trail
To the woods where the wing of the lory
The scarlet geranium strikes pale ;

O'er the aloë the honey-birds quiver
Like emeralds, feathered with flame,
While the kingfisher's plunge sends a shiver
Of light through the depths of the stream.

Sweet orchids, in shadow reposing,
Sigh scents on the path of the bee ;
Bright lilies in splendour enclosing,
Woo butterflies over the lea ;
Soft moss, for a dryad fit pillow,
Droops thick over tree-trunk and stone
In the depths of each fern-brimming hollow,
Where the moistening sea's breath is blown.

O'er a league of fair woodland and meadow,
Rich in flower and grass and soft fern,
Where the antelope couches in shadow,
And the curlew pipes over the tarn,
Lie the infinite waters of wonder,
Man's terror and scourge and delight—
That rave with the tempest in thunder,
Or laugh like a child in the light.

Here the silence at midnight is shattered
By the cry of the breakers in pain,
When the strength of their legion is scattered,
And their might is as curbed with a chain ;
Here the snowstorms of foam, fierce as fire,
Shine bright 'neath the stars that they hide,
When the resonant surges retire
From the rock that their rage hath defied.

Yet the heart that is weary of beating
Finds here from its fever surcease,
And grief of compassion finds greeting
Where the war-song of waters is peace ;
Where the roar of the strife-smitten world
Is drowned in the chant of the sea,
Lo ! the banner of peace is unfurled,
And the soul in its thralldom is free.

W. C. Scully.

The Bushman's Cave.

I STAND behind the waterfall
That downward shoots, till spent in spray,
It clinging clasps the rocky wall
That beetles o'er the river way ;
A secret cave is here fast hid
In swathing bands of forest dense,
A casket with a rocky lid,
Within the stream's circumference.
'Tis here the vanished bushman dwelt—
He, with his brood, long years ago—
Beneath this ledge ; and deftly spelt,
In pictures that still freshly glow,
The wild-wood creatures, not more wild
Than he, who, hiding thus apart,
His idle days and hours beguiled
At his strange, harmless limning art.
Here human creatures hoped and loved,
And feared and hated in their turn—
Rejoiced when fortune kindly proved,
And over life's despites did mourn ;

Here women nursed their babes, here maids
Oft listened to their lovers rude ;
Here death has thrown a deeper shade
Of darkness o'er the gloomy wood.

There, in yon cleft, is still the mark
Of bygone fires whose flames are dead
As those who lit them—life's strange spark
And glowing ember, each has sped.
And by the south wind's gentle sigh
The flickering, sunlit leaves are turned,
And from the cliffs the brown hawks cry
To-day, as when each brightly burned.

Through fancy's glass I see around
The shades of long-dead forms arisen ;
They move and breathe without a sound,
And live in their brief poet-season ;
There lie their bows, their arrows keen,
Whilst on the fire an earthen pot
Holds, simmering slowly, foul and green,
The arrow-poison's foetid clot.

There lies an antelope, fresh killed,
By hungry stomachs close surrounded,
And there's a wicker-basket filled
With luscious locusts, freshly pounded ;
And look, the glowing coals upon,
A scaly snake is quickly toasting,
Whilst on that ledge, there in the sun,
The hunters of their deeds are boasting.

'Tis gone ; 'twas but a glimpse, a flash,
That for an instant lit the past ;
I see now but the water dash
In quivering spray-sheets downward cast,
And on the rocks, in deathless hue,
The records of a perished race
That from this land of ours withdrew
In silence, leaving scarce a trace.

Poor waifs upon creation's skirts,
Your melancholy history,
To men of earnest mind, asserts
A problem, and a mystery :
Whence came ye ? Wherefore did ye live
To wither from the sphere of being—
And why did Nature to ye give
No ears to hear, nor eyes for seeing ?—

The music and the light whereby
All men must walk, to guide your steps
Along life's path beneath the sky,
Between the snaring pitfall deeps ;
Ye sank from something higher far,
And, distanced in life's struggling race,
Your last and failing remnants are
Erased from off the great world's face.

W. C. Scully.

'Nkongane.

OLD—some eighty, or thereabouts ;
Sly as a badger alert for honey ;
Honest perhaps—but I have my doubts—
With an eye that snaps at the chink of money ;
Poor old barbarian, your Christian veneer
Is thin and cracked, and the core inside
Is heathen and natural. Quaint and queer
Is your aspect, and yet, withal, dignified.

When your lips unlock to the taste of rum,
The tongue runs on with its cackle of clicks—
That, like bubbles, break as their consonants come,
For your speech is a brook full of frisky tricks.
You love to recall the days of old—
That are sweet to us all, for the alchemist Time
Strangely touches the basest of metals to gold,
And to-day's jangled peal wakes to-morrow's rich
chime.

But not the past in a moony haze,
That shines for us sons of Europe, is yours—
You glow with the ardour of blood-stained days
And deeds long past—you were one of the doers—
Of spears washed red in the blood of foes,
Of villages wrapped in red flame, of fields
Where the vultures gorged, of the deadly close
Of the impi's horns, and the thundering shields.

Strange old man—like a lonely hawk
In a leafless forest that falls to the axe,
You linger on ; and you love to talk,
Yet your tongue full often a listener lacks.
Truth and fiction, like chaff and grain,
You mix together ; and often I try
To sift the one from the other, and gain
The fact from its shell of garrulous lie.

You were young when Chaka, the scourge of man,
Swept over the land like the Angel of Death ;
You marched in the rear, when the veteran van
Mowed down the armies—reapers of wrath !
You sat on the ground in the crescent, and laid
Your shield down flat when Dingaan spake loud—
His vitals pierced by the murderer's blade—
To his warriors fierce, in dread anguish bowed.

And now to this : to cringe for a shilling,
To skulk round the mission-house, hungry and lone ;
To carry food to the women tilling
The fields of maize ! For ever have flown
The days of the spear that the rust has eaten,
The days of the ploughshare suit you not ;
Time hath no gift that your life can sweeten,
A living death is your piteous lot.

W. C. Scully.

The Cattle Thief.

I RISE from my bed
When the moon is dead,
And hidden is every star ;
When the white man sleeps,
And the tired hound
No vigil keeps,
But, in slumber sound,
Follows the chase afar.

I swiftly glide
Down the dark hillside,
And creep to the farmer's kraal,
Where the sleek-limbed kine,
With breath so sweet,
That will soon be mine,
In my bush retreat,
Wake at my soft, low call.

We quickly pass
O'er the dew-wet grass,
For my whistle they tamely follow ;
Over hill and dale
We hurry apace,
For the morning pale
Will bring the chase
On our track down the bushy hollow.

No rest we know,
For we hurrying go
To our forest sanctuary,
Through thickets dense
Where the bush-buck lies,
Beneath krantzes whence
The leopard's eyes
Look down for his morning quarry.

My home is far,
And the morning star
Rose twice on our hither track ;
Where the wide Bashee
From Baziya's side
Rolls toward the sea,
My kinsmen bide,
And they watch for my coming back.

For I wooed a maid,
But her father said,
Ere his daughter I might marry,
Five heifers fair,
And oxen five,
I must homeward bear ;
So for love I strive,
For I could no longer tarry.

Of all the maids
That hoe in our glades,
Noniese is the trimmest one ;
She's lithe as a snake,

As a partridge brown ;
And I crouch in the brake
Ere the sun goes down,
Till she pass when her work is done.

In three days more,
To her father's door—
If I 'scape the keen pursuit—
I'll come with the spoil,
And I'll tell my dear
Of the danger and toil,
And she'll tremblingly hear,
Whilst her eyes shine comfort mute.

W. C. Scully.

Namaqualand.

A LAND of deathful sleep, where fitful dreams
Of hurrying spring scarce wake swift fading flowers ;
A land of fleckless sky, and sheer-shed beams
Of sun and stars through day's and dark's slow hours,
A land where sand has choked once fluent streams—
Where grassless plains lie girt by granite towers
That fright the swift and heaven-nurtured teams
Of winds that bear afar the sea-gleaned showers.
The wild Atlantic, fretted by the breath
Of fiery gales o'er leagues of desert sped,
Rolls back, and wreaks in surf its thunderous wrath
On rocks that down the wan, wide shore are spread ;
The waves for ever roar a song of death,
The shore they roar to is for ever dead.

W. C. Scully.

The Summer-House.

I BUILT my love a resting bower
Within a glade where forest trees
Stretched o'er the sward their budding boughs,
That chafed and mingled in the breeze.

And wild wood flowers, strange and bright,
Devised in nature's mystic mood,
Around the arbour trellis twined,
And quaintly draped the sombre wood.

Rich butterflies in ceaseless dance
Threaded the blossom-bordered gloom,
And singing bees in summer-time
Rifled each honey-laden bloom.

From here we'd see the timid dawn
Glance shyly from the eastern sky ;
Or, in the west, the cloud-built pyre
Flame with the morrow's prophecy.

And oft we'd sit in sultry noons,
When throbbing nature sank to sleep,
And read the lore in love-lit eyes,
Of secrets rare that lovers keep.

Strange living things that underground
In secret places keep their home,
And fangless serpents, void of hurt,
Would to her gentle presence come.

She faded, but I saw it not—

How could I, when the love-plumed wings
That sped the swift hours dimmed my eyes,
And closed my ears to passing things ?

I knew her love was fadeless—knew

That mine could die not, nor could deem
That love was life's alone, and life
A dream, and love an inner dream.

She faded, and it seemed her life

Passed to the blossom-burthened sprays ;
The orchid seemed instinct with sense,
The lily tried to breathe and gaze.

She died when summer's failing light

Slid into autumn's golden gloom,
And when my hopes like faded leaves
Sank dead, they laid her in the tomb.

And now, when spring-time wakes the world,

I watch each slowly opening flower
That, from the silence where she dwells,
Comes with fresh tidings to her bower.

W. C. Scully.

Song of the Seasons.

WHAT says the antelope,

Couched in the fern ?

Winter is cold,

When will spring-time return ?

Moist wind from the sea, set the fountains aflowing,
Hie hitherward, Spring, set the wild flowers blowing.

What says the snake,

As he creeps from the shadow ?

Summer bides far,

Spring is chill in the meadow.

Sun, climb aloft, slanted beams quicken slowly ;
Sheer shed, they warm both the high and the lowly.

What says the lory,

Hoarse from the spray ?

Autumn brings fruit,

After summer away.

Droop, flowers vain, for your mission is ended,
To bear the seed babes was your beauty intended.

What says the world ?

Winter's my rest ;

After a revel

Slumber is best.

Sigh, sad south wind, o'er the wild ocean faring,
From ice fields afar your white frost burthen bearing.

W. C. Scully.

Sleep's Threshold.

WHAT gauzy shapes of shadow wind
Across the soul's husht meadow-plain,
In forms that fade and glow again,
When sleep first dawns upon the mind.

Like light-limbed antelopes, that skim
Across the wide and waste Karoo,
In changing combinations new
Their mingling masses hover dim.

They float and flit in wizard ways,
Above, below, and in, and out,
A reckless-ranging, lissom rout,
That takes no heed of roads nor days.

They are not thralls of space nor time,
These dwellers on the skirts of death ;
They tread not earth, they breathe not breath,
Their homes are not of earthly clime.

Their tresses float on airless breeze,
Their raiment hath not woof nor warp,
Their music as a soundless harp
No sense may soothe nor ear appease.

The shadows, they of undreamt dreams,
The wraiths of buried hopes and fears,
The vapour fumed from fallen tears,
The masks of what is not, yet seems.

Like moths and butterflies they rise
From secret cells of waking thought,
And see strange light and come to naught,
And vanish swiftly, dewdrop-wise.

And no man knoweth where they keep
Their revels strange in waking hours ;
They fleet like summer-smitten flowers,
When eyelids feel the kiss of sleep.

W. C. Scully.

Song : A Red Rose.

A RED rose hung on a green rose-tree,
And the summer winds were blowing ;
It grew where a streamlet babbled free,
'Tween mossy rocks swift flowing.

A humble bee sought the rose's heart,
While the summer winds were blowing ;
And the red rose petals he rent apart
For the pollen, yellow glowing.

A preying bird seized the hapless bee,
While the summer winds were blowing ;
And upon a spine of a thorny tree
Hung him high, in the sunlight showing.

A hawk swooped out of the sunlit sky,
While the summer winds were blowing,
And bore the bird to the eyrie high,
Where its hungry young were cawing.

W. C. Scully.

Sonnet.

I LEANT my breast against the golden gate
That bars the body from the land of dreams,
But lets the soul to roam in lawns where wait
Or wander down the banks of shining streams
The dead and living, holding strange debate
Of things that yet should happen 'neath the beams
Of suns yet unrisen, whilst listless Fate
Paused, and the stars unyoked their tired teams.

And as my hand the latch sought, for I fain
Had followed one who wore a white rose-wreath,
Sleep touched mine eyes with darkness, and the pain
Of longing ceased ; and when I next drew breath
I heard a voice low whisper, " It is vain
To enter here—thou first must drink of death ! "

W. C. Scully.

Good and Evil.

METHOUGHT I saw an angel on the sun
Sit thronéd, whilst around the planets swayed,
Each with its guiding spirit, that obeyed
In duteous wise that lofty-visaged one ;
But on this earth it seemed two spirits fought
A deadly combat, struggling hand to hand—
The GOOD and EVIL, over sea and land
Locked in a strife with dreadful issues fraught.
For as the calm-eyed ruler of each sphere
Bore slowly past the battle-riven world,

Firm in his mighty hand he held a spear
Poised o'er his head, and ready to be hurled—
To dash this globe to fragments as it whirled,
Should Evil's brow the wreath of victory wear.
W. C. Scully.

Two Graves.

(Dr. Livingstone's and his Wife's.)

I.

THE one lies low beneath a tropic sun,
Where huge Zambesi—spent and tired of rage,
And silent after roarings, and the leap
From heights, the wonder of the world,—slow glides,
And presses ocean backward in his strength.
It holds the dust of what was once a woman,
A woman who from distant Scotland came
To help her hero-husband to maintain—
As errand knight of God, in foremost rank,—
The peaceful war of love, and truth, and light.
Against the hordes of darkness, hate and death,
She came ; and three short months had scarcely gone
When fiery fever held her in his grip ;
Then death came, and from ruined body drew
The faithful soul, and rendered it to God.
No woman's hand was there to flicker cool,
And drop its balmful touches on her brow ;
No thought of piteous comfort might she take,
That in some holy spot amongst the tombs
That held her kindred's ashes, hers would be
A shrine for love's devotion to adorn.
Alas ! she knew that he whose hot tears fell

Upon her dying face, ay, even he,
Her husband, might not linger by her grave,
But, by the trumpet tones of duty called,
Must hasten onward, even to his death.

II.

Within the lofty fane where sacred dust
Of heroes, saints, and singers lie in state,
His bones are laid. He died upon his knees,
Alone, and far from sympathy of man,
His head upon his buckler Bible laid ;
Weary and spent, he answered to the call
When God said to his servant, " Come and rest."
And faithful hands then bore his body far
O'er swamp and desert-sand unto the sea ;
And Heaven's winds swift wafted it across
The sea-fields to the far sea-girdled isle
Whose son he was ; and Britain, with one voice
Of reverent mourning, voted him her first
And highest honour, and with sad acclaim
Bestowed a seat in the high pantheon
Of famed Westminster.

III.

Though their dust apart
Is separated by the Libyan waste
That stretches from the Mountains of the Moon
To where old Atlas stands and tells the sky
The secrets of the desert and the lore
Of his wild daughter Ocean ; tho' the curve
Of the great world's strong shoulder swells between ;
Yet sure they are together.

W. C. Scully.

Voices of Africa.¹*Africa.*

SPHINX among continents,—the Nations strive
To guess my ancient riddle ; Greece essayed—
She drooped to death ; upon me Rome set gyve—
She sank in her own bonds. The Persian laid
His life down 'mid my deserts. For a day
I smiled on each, then tore them for my play.

The Sahara.

The ghosts of buried cities scale the air
When Day wakes my mirage. The lion keeps
My iron hills. The bones of men lie bare
Where my thirst-sickle its rich harvest reaps.
Time, like a little child, amid my sands
Builds and unbuilds with feeble, listless hands.

Egypt.

The gods who dwell 'mid equatorial snows
Bade Nilus cleave the waste, and I awoke.
A giant, robed in mystery, I arose ;
The young world listened, breathless, when I spoke.
My Sphinx Time's sister is ; her brood lies hid
Where dream the dead 'neath rock and pyramid.

By Veldt and Kopje.—T. Fisher Unwin.

Carthage.

Sidon sent forth her sons, her sons sent Tyre ;
The Desert's daughters bore a mighty race.
The God whose brazen hands sloped to the fire
Reared o'er me the red terror of his face.
Rome, vengeful, trod me to the dust, and strowed
With salt the site where once my powers abode.

Alexandria.

The godlike Alexander wav'd his sword ;
Beneath its spell rose palace, mart and school,
No gold so precious as my lightest word ;
My logos still the Faith of Man doth rule.
Greek, Roman and Barbarian, East and West,
Drank lore like milk from my most bounteous breast.

Mount Atlas.

Time haled the great Globe from my aching back
And hung it 'mid the stars. Content I rest,
The ocean's murmured music at my feet,
The foldless flocks of cloudland round my crest.
Pan walks with Faunus through my dreaming woods,
And Dryads pace my leafy solitudes.

Ruwenzori.

A diadem of changeless snow lies light
Upon my regal head ; my locks I shake,
And, straightway, living waters take their flight
The iron bonds of Ancient Drought to break.
A virgin, new-unveiled, I stand alone ;
Æons will pass, but none unclasp my zone.

The Lakes.

Hand seeking hand, a peerless sisterhood,
We watched for dawn through dark of murd'rous years
Our sky-pure fringes mired with human blood,
Our rain-sweet wavelets salt with human tears.
Our tideless glasses gleam resplendently
High o'er the rockings of the restless sea.

The Congo.

Through jungles spawned from fever-drunken sod
Where, sleeplessly, the foul man-hunters hide,
The bitter lees from God's dread wine-press trod
By desperate feet, drain down my tepid tide.
Leviathan there wallows in his wrath ;
There range the hordes of mighty Behemoth.

The Zambesi.

The spoils the sky had of the world-wide main
I bear, new-gathered from ten thousand rills
To where the thund'rous gates my steps enchain,
Clogged with the wastage of a million hills.
Thence, breaking forth in triumph, full and free,
I render back my booty to the sea.

Zimbabwe.

I housed the brood of Carthage ; they the earth
Deep rifled for its treasure. On me fell
The hand of Doom. No rumour speaks my birth,
No legend shrines my death. My citadel
Glares at the cold fane of my obscene god,
O'er which the feet of ancient ruin trod.

The Southern Deserts.

The wayward Spring, in dalliance afar,
Forgets us for long seasons, till the sky
Weeps for our burning woe ; then, star on star,
Rich blossoms from our glowing dunes arise.
Thirst, with his legioned agonies, still stands
Warding the barren empire of our sands.

The Black Peoples.

God smote us with an itch to dip our hands
In one another's blood. Our long travail
The ages hearken to. The ocean sands
Than we are not more myriad. Men hale
Us forth in chains o'er every moaning sea
Foul with the trails of Man's iniquity.

Kimberley.

I sprang from 'neath the desert sand, and cast
A double-handed shower of living gems
I' the world's astonished visage. In my vast
Black, echoing chasm, whence the bright diadems
Of half Earth's thrones are furnish'd, I can hear
The lost souls wander, wailing, far and near.

Johannesburg.

A mænad seated on a golden throne ;
My plaything is a nation's destiny ;
My feet are clay, my bosom is a stone ;
The princes of all lands are fain of me,
But, stark, before the splendour of my gates,
The grim Boer, leaning on his rifle, waits.

The White Commonwealths.

To-morrow unregarded, clean effaced
The lesson of unhallowed yesterday,
We rail against each other ; interlaced
Albeit are our fortunes. So we stray,
Blind to the lurid writing on the wall,
Deaf to the words Fate's warning lips let fall.

(1899.)

W. C. Scully.

At Kalk Bay.

ASLEEP ! now dreams the curly head
Of all the treasures I outspread
Upon the shore—queer ocean things :
Blue men-of-war, all strings and stings ;
An octopus ; two prickly green
And swollen fish, aburst with spleen.

To bring them home, thine only care ;
Of odour fearsome, nursemaid's glare,
Oblivious. Sobbing in thy sleep !
I, the stern father, come to peep,
Kiss thee, and place this new-bought toy
There—in the bucket—morning's joy !

When life's night cometh will the store
That I have gathered strew the shore ?
Is what we rescue from the wave
So priceless—worth our while to save ?
Does he whose bucket on the sand
Is emptied by the Father's hand

Lose aught ? Kindly is God's contempt
For man's upgatherings. If exempt
From heritage of failing powers,
No richer thou in heavenly bowers,
A day of healthful toil thy gain,
Not what the bucket may contain.

A. Vine Hall.

Thomas Pringle.

(Poet and Reformer.)

WITH glory of poetic light
The century dawned whose night
Is deepening around us. Joyful rang
The earth when all those morning stars together sang.
Our Ocean-Mother gave to us
One, not least luminous,—
Pringle, the poet of the parched Karoo.
From thralldom of the “glittering eye” his music drew
Coleridge, who loved its magic well ;
E’en Scott beneath it fell,
Forgetful of the Gael and Saxon feud
While listening to that weird romance of solitude.
A fighter thou, with never time
To build the deathless rhyme ;
Thine the flung gauntlet of a righteous hate,
And thine a flower of song to lone ways consecrate.
Thou singest ; we behold the band
Of exiles leave their land :
The fair dear hills of Scotland fade away
For ever ! eyes unused to weeping weep that day.
But hallowed page, and David’s lyre,
And thine their hearts inspire.
And now they tread the hot and barren shore ;
And now, by floods bereft of all their humble store,
Thy pen it is that wins relief.
But soon they lose their chief—
The conquest of the desert has begun,
And a far fiercer fight must by his blade be won :

The battle of the Press. Full sore
The rain of blows he bore !
Fainting with wounds he quits the well-fought field,
But not before the shout telling the foemen yield.
And yet again with gleaming brand,
One of a hero-band,
The world beholds him : on Oppression's grave
His hand doth plant the flag that frees the trembling slave.
Hard seems the fate that once again
Forbids the knight to drain
The cup, to feast and grace the board with song,—
Death beckons him : he glides from that illustrious
throng.
Then Calumny, once timorous-tame,
Grew bold and, crawling, came,
With the vile brood that haunts her loathsome cave;
They gibber round and spill their venom on his grave.
“ Therefore his life was failure ! ” say
Those who but count the pay.
Fools even thus : from the world's poor renown
God ever saveth some for His own hand to crown.
Pringle, we love thy hate of wrong,
Thy simple, heart-felt song !
A knightly soul, unbought, and unafraid ;
This country oweth much to thy two-edged blade :
And when the crowds of meanly great
And sordidly elate
Are dust long since forgotten, Afric's page
Will boast thy name as now—a light from age to age.
A. Vine Hall.

The Spirit of the Summit.

"That path no bird of prey knoweth, neither hath the falcon's eye seen it."—JOB.

WHERE the desperate grass to the precipice clings,
Where the smoke of the torrent will moisten thy wings,
Past the caves in the crags where the Hurricanes hide,
Daring Adventurer, fearlessly ride.

Onward and upward defying the clouds,
Eluding the lean hands they stretch from their shrouds,
Joyously pass on thy pinions of might,
Seeking the golden pavilions of Light.

Is it love so emboldens—the limitless blue
To voyage, companionless, eager to woo
The Goddess of Fire from her home in the sun,
Heedless of where the round Earth may have spun ?

Vainly I dream it ! Thou never canst rise
Half of the distance that Fantasy flies,
Glancing not back till from planets afar
Earth glimmers faintly, a vanishing star !

Plumage of gold in the westering glow ;
Thoughts upon rapine and slaughter below ;
Of thy blood-sprinkled eyrie bethink thee and fly,
Ere Darkness shall chase thee in rage from the sky.

Poor Spirit, alas ! that my spirit should be
In strength and in feebleness kindred to thee !
Now rising exultant on pinions of fire,
Now failing and falling, down, down to the mire.

Yea, pity thou *me*, for not thine the keen pain
Of wings that to reach to the Ultimate, strain :
Thou, happy to sail over mountainous dust ;
I, to the Uttermost, longing to thrust

Through showering stars, like adventurous prow
Of some boat of the Ancients, until on the brow
Of ocean there gleam the gold circlet of sand,
And the keel rushes up on Creation's last strand.

Oh ! why am I tortured while watching thy course ?
Why the fierce longing ? and why the remorse ?
Ah ! why the remorse ? O'er the purple ravine
I see thee ascending by pathways unseen,

Nor feel a reproach for not striving to scale
By footholds of sapphire : then why that I fail
To advance by the more inaccessible way
Of sun-sprinkled Space to the Gates of the Day ?

O Desire ! art thou prophet or fiend ? Wherefore
stand

Solemnly pointing with eloquent hand
Mortals (whose feet are on burial sod !)
Up to the infinite, up to a God ?

A prophet I hail thee, and tremblingly cry—
“ May we grasp a great Destiny—scaling the sky ! ”
What is remorse for the failure to-day
But the Voice of Omnipotence saying “ Ye may ! ”

A. Vine Hall.

Two Decembers.

Now o'er the Homeland dear,
Winter hurls a glittering spear,
While all the furies of the Arctic night,
Following his icy car's impetuous flight,
Scream in demoniac mirth,
As down the blast
They stream, aghast
Stands the fair Earth :

In vain the bowing woods a trembling homage pay ;
Groaning, they see their bright wealth whirled away ;
He flies o'er the streams, they stiffen !—fields, and lo !
Fear petrifies the clods. But hearth-fires glow ;
And through long evenings, round the blaze,
Happy children raise
Merry defiance of the blustering king
Whose pæans frenzied winds and deep-voiced surges
sing.

Sweet is December 'neath the southern sun :—
The morning music of the wak'ning glade ;
The fiery Noon and pine-woods' purple shade ;
The timid twilight beautiful but fleet ;
The star-eyed balmy night whose gentle feet
Disturb no dreaming flower, so light they pass,
Nor shake one diamond from the dewy grass.

Sweet is December 'neath the Southern sun,
The cloudless blue !

Yet envy not our brighter skies
(Ye who from the ancient Home
May not roam),
Soon smitten through
By shafts of glory, *our* world fainting lies,
Craving the storm ye fain would shun,
While yours, baptised with power,
Renews her strength and beauty : blessed dower
After brief trial hour !
And when the blossomed hawthorns throw
On emerald grass their showers of fragrant snow ;
When lark, and thrush, and blackbird sing
All the splendour of the Spring,
All the miracle of the living,
And the nightingale's thanksgiving
Carries through the moonlit night
Every note of day's delight,
In so intense an ecstasy,
Such a rain
Of rapture as to mortal brain
Must needs appear akin to pain——
England ! if *now* from every shore
Thy sons return in thought once more
To hear the Christmas bells waken thy woodlands hoar,
What *then* shall be
Their passionate desire for thee—
To kiss thy daisy-sandalled feet,
And their undying love for thee and thine repeat :

A. Vine Hall.

Coronation Ode.

(*Edward VII and Alexandra.* 1902.)

FREEMEN, we bring our Sovereign lord a homage proud
and free,

And place upon his brow to-day the Crown of Liberty.

For us, no helpless crouching down beneath a tyrant's
power ;

Nor passing choice of mob-formed breath, the passions
of the hour.

We take our Kings by God's own choice, the sacred law
of birth ;

But we have also taught our Kings the sacred law of
worth.

The Sceptre from Victoria's hands comes weighted with
the gold

Of honour and unselfish grace, of duty manifold.

Not for himself our King ascends the steps of Britain's
throne.

The people's suffrage with him goes ; the glory is our
own.

Our story of a thousand years, though oft with fault
and flaw,

Reveals a royal progress still of liberty and law,—

Shows 'mid the ruins, smoking yet, of things that once
have been,

Above the crash of Kings and States, a Sovereignty
serene,

Which, like the Queen we hail to-day with many a
jubilant chime,

Retains its beauty unimpaired despite the lapse of time.

Who thinks, upon the nuptial morn, that love and bliss
may fail ?

There is the hope, there is the joy, there is the bridal
veil.

This is an Empire's Wedding-day : its fair ideal shines,
And of its hopes and purposes a fadeless garland
twines.

Not ours to hide, in garish light, the shadows round the
Throne,—

War's consequence, the orphan's cry, mothers and
widows' moan,—

Religious discord, social strife, and racial discontent,—
The murmur of the toiling crowds, beneath their
burdens bent.

These to the Empire's heart appeal, nor to the crown
belong ;

There is a meaning in the words, " the King can do no
wrong."

The Sovereign Power unshaken stands, like truth o'er
passing dreams,

And, lit with glory from on high, above the shadow
gleams,—

Gleams as th' eternal starlight gleams over earth's
cloudy floor,—

Crowns as the steadfast rainbow crowns the cataract's
varying roar.

Therefore our hundred million souls join heart, and
mind, and voice,

Therefore, all strife and discord hushed, one triumph
we rejoice :

And through the Empire's earth-wide bounds, joy's
emblems we display,

The King and Queen of all our realms are throned and
crowned to-day.

F. C. Kolbe.

Table Mountain.

GREAT Table Mountain, which I daily scan
With still increasing joy, this morn was framed
In a low rainbow Phœbus rightly aimed
Just to include the outline in its span.
And surely never since the world began
Was Nature's ruggedness more sweetly tamed.
Yet through my heart a sudden terror flamed ;
Heaven's smile more dread inspires than earthly ban.
Such is the alchemy of sun and rain :
Touching earth's choicest dream of loveliness,
It turned life's daily pleasure into awe.
And, pray, what meant it ? Nay, I cannot guess :
But all that is within me,—soul, heart, brain,—
Was dumbly glorified by what I saw.

F. C. Kolbe.

The Spirit of Hidden Places.¹

OVER the mountain's shoulder, round the unweathered
cape,

In lands beyond the sky-line, there hides a nameless
shape,—

Whether of fiend or goddess no mortal well may know ;
But when she speaks—with flushing cheeks, they one
by one must go.

To men in far old cities, scanning the curious chart,
Her voice would sound at midnight, like music in the
heart ;

Across the wrinkled parchment a glory seemed to fall,
And pageants pass like shapes in glass along the pic-
tured wall.

She led the sails of Lisbon beyond the Afric shore,
Winning a world of wonders by seas unknown before.
She watched the sturdy captains of Holland's India
fleet

Planting their post on that grim coast where the two
oceans meet.

Yea, and in earlier ages, what ghostly race were they
Who left the eastward waters to tread the inland way ?
Who bore the gold of Ophir and built the tower of
stone—

But left no sign save empty mine, and rampart over-
thrown.

¹ For permission to include these selections from Mr. Fallaw's poems the Editor is indebted to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., the owners of the copyright.

But others find their footsteps, and strike the trail
anew.

How fared the burghers onward across the wild Karoo !
And still, with hand at bridle and eyes that search the
wind,

With strain and stress the white men press that mocking
sprite to find.

We seek her by the valley,—she moves upon the height ;
The rainbow stands athwart us to blind her from our
sight ;

Along the sea-bound bastion her steps are hid in spray,
And though we dream,—with morning gleam the lustre
dies away.

Yet sometimes for a moment men think to feel her nigh :
When first the lost Moon Mountain unveils to Stanley's
eye ;

Or when the Great White Wanderer beheld Zambesi leap
With earthquake-stroke and sounding smoke down the
stupendous steep.

And then again we lose her, for lack of wizard skill,
Only the message liveth that tells us, *Further still !*
Yet could we come upon her, and seize, and hold her
fast,

The onward track would something lack of its old
magic past.

No secret on the ridges, no whisper in the air,
No sense of paths untrodden, no shadow anywhere ;
Earth robbed of half her glamour, and ocean void of
awe—

The proud pursuit that brings not fruit is man's eternal
law.

Lance Fallaw.

Day and Night Up-Country.

O'ER the unshaded veldt
The ruthless sun
Pauses, as though he felt
His course half run.

The noontide world stands still
And gasps for air ;
Lifts every breathless hill
A forehead bare.

Along the quivering ground
The heat-haze hangs,
Casting a mirage round
The aloe fangs.

Down by the dam, knee deep,
A brooding band,
Like statues seen in sleep
The cattle stand.

And stretched beside them lies
Their Kaffir herd,
Watching with narrowed eyes
The weaver bird.

In the hot glare, how near
The distance seems !
The league-long hills show clear
Through all our dreams.

Hills in whose giant tower
Soft darkness hides,
And whence at evening's hour
Her shadow glides.

Blest moment ! quickly come—
Thy breeze we know,
Waking the lips grown dumb,
The pulses slow.

Come with thy starry sky,
A boundless deep ;
Under thy quiet eye
We would not sleep,

But watch the lonely land
Her breast unfold,
When night's grey colours stand
Athwart the gold ;

See the long mountains bend,
And take new shape ;
Strange shadows to descend,
And mists to drape.

Till morning's lighter air
Blows up from far,—
Day, thou art wondrous fair
By sun or star !

Lance Fallaw.

Old St. Thomas' Churchyard, Durban.

No English willow for our English dead :
The soft flamboyant shades their southern sleep.
On the spare grass syringa blooms are shed,
And lithe virginias creep
Over the stones where the swift lizards tread.
The rose is here, but with a faint perfume ;
And, standing 'thwart the hedge, the kaffir-boom
Holds in mid-air its tufts of poppy red.

Worship has gone, but Peace has never left
The church deserted, with the toppling tower
And the dead creeper—Time can make no theft
Of her unpassing hour,
For Time in this retreat seems wing-bereft.
The world is all apart—far, far away
The eyes scarce catch the shapes of Bluff and Bay,
Where tree and gable leave an opening cleft.

Slowly the great gate opens, as 'twere loth
To yield its sombre pathways to our tread.
Slowly we saunter, reading thro' thick growth
The records of the dead.
The spirit of the place demands an oath
Of silence, and of endless quietness.
Yet many here on whom the lilies press
Had little time for reverie or sloth.

Far off at times they seem—and yet how near

Those days of simpler manners, sterner life,
The settler-days of hatchet, gun, and spear,
Of hardship and of strife.

Labour and action try the pioneer,

But not the heart-ache easier dreamers know ;
Else had he never built and founded so,
Nor we, who follow, traced his footsteps here.

Strange temple ! where the savage horde of old

Reared their round huts, and cleared their tilling-
place :

Now thou hast rest and slumber to enfold

Those of another race.

Does peace come never till the pulse be cold ?

Here, surely, could the living find her too.

Yet must we win her ; there is much to do,
And this land's charter still but half unrolled.

Lo ! evening falls ; far over Mariannhill

The sunset hangs, and the rich after-glow
Sets the dark woods on fire ; the air is still,

The grey bats come and go ;

A thousand insects chirp in chorus shrill,

The firefly wanders with her elfin light,

And the young moon grows on the speedy night
That gathers round us ere we leave the hill.

Lance Fallaw.

Simon van der Stel.

SOUTHWARD ever the Dutchman steered,
Southward with right good will ;
No more the sea-worn sailor feared
The Cape of Table Hill.

No longer frowned the savage land
With famine fierce and fell,
For bounteous were the heart and hand
Of Simon van der Stel.

Not as the rest, for greed of spoil,
He ruled by Table Bay ;
In new-built barn and seeded soil,
His little kingdom lay.

Cornfield and garden, oak and vine,
He loved and tended well.

“ Who plants a tree is friend of mine,”
Quoth Simon van der Stel.

All in a pleasant vale was laid
The dorp that bears his name,¹
With bough of fruit and leaf of shade,
To bless the founder's aim.

Here oft he sat in simple state,
A kindly tale to tell ;
And children kept the birthday fête
Of Simon van der Stel.

Yet not beside the guarded Cape
His narrowed fancy dwelt ;
Not only in the golden grape
Was all the flame he felt.

¹ Stellenbosch.

He knew the thought that feeds and fills,
The ceaseless northward spell ;
Three hundred miles to the Copper Hills
Rode Simon van der Stel.

The exiles of the frugal French
A southern refuge sought ;
He bade them prove, by hedge and trench,
The skill their fathers taught.
He watched his race of sturdy boers,
He saw their numbers swell ;
" Send wives for lusty bachelors,"
Wrote Simon van der Stel.

Full thirty years her quiet charm
The Cape-land o'er him cast,
Till at Constantia's favoured farm
He turned to rest at last.
The builders from the *Haarlem* wreck
Dug deep and founded well ;
But chief of all their work to deck
Was Simon van der Stel.

True statesman of that elder day,
The Dutchman's praise be thine !
Nor lesser claim need Britons lay
To kinship of thy line.
Two races at our councils sit,
One nation yet to dwell ;
And both are heirs, by worth and wit,
Of Simon van der Stel.

Lance Fallaw.

A Cape Homestead.

JUST that glimpse of the Table Rock
Seems the key to the breathless spell.
Never, you'd say, could the wild wind shock
A single leaf from the oaks of Stel.
Four white gables, with scroll and bend,
Lettered and dated, nobly wide ;
Red roof, and the shutters, end to end,
Flung back at the lattice side.

Sleep for ever seems nestling there,
All uncounted the hours go by.
Silent sits in his deep old chair,
That white-haired man, with the dreaming eye.
Does he think, as the shadows fall,
And the swift bats skim in the evening glow,
Of the haunting voices that used to call
Through the doorways long ago ?

Think of the days when the young folks made
Mirth and music beneath that roof,
Danced at night in the moon's soft shade,
And rode and hunted by kop and kloof ?
Yes, and the time when the boys would trek,
When the Cape cart stood by the open door,
Till they watched it rounding the far-off nek . . .
And another came back no more.

Oh, white nest, but thy birds are far ;
East and northward the strong sons go ;
One where the lone Nyanzas are,
One where the shoals of the Orange flow.
One is treading the world's wide path
In crowded cities beyond the seas ;
And one found rest, in the hour of wrath,
On a warrior's couch of ease.

Bid them come back again—those that can,
Lead them hither o'er berg and veldt.
Comely woman and proper man,
Let them kneel where of old they knelt.
Would they not in a moment take
Step and voice from the years long fled ?
Just as soon might the dead one wake
From his wild Shangani bed !

Yet he waiteth, the grey old sire,
On the pillared stoep, by the creeping vines.
The low sun wraps him with rosy fire,
And the thin gum-shadows are drawn like lines.
The Kaffir, driving the great-horned herds,
Passes, crooning a quiet tune ;
And the mountains mutter, too low for words,
“ We shall comfort him very soon.”

Lance Fallaw.

Zourberg Mountains.

HAIL ! land of drifting cloud and wooded wold,
Thy fairy scenes seem conjured by the hand
Of wizard king. Thy hills majestic stand
Aloft with time-bronzed brows searéd and old,
And heavenward fling their nodding peaks on high :
The breezy zephyrs rush careering free ;
The eagle waves his wing of liberty.
Here Nature reigns in grand sublimity ;
Far through the southern haze Old Ocean gleams
Silvered with sunlight foam, and mournfully
Heaves his wild arms—with words inspired he seems,
Mutt'ring a prologue to Eternity.
God of my soul, on earth such scenes we find,
Guiding from them to Thee the human mind.

M. J. MacMahon.

The Lost Child.

It was an eve when the wild wind
Came moaning from the restless sea.
The sun sank low, and left behind
Darkness, and the wind minstrelsy
Of Ocean chafing the rugged shore
'Mid storm and spray and hoarse waves' roar.

The brave, proud barque, which ere the noon
On pearly wings sculled scatheless on,
Had met the squall's fierce rage, and soon
Her pride, her loveliness were gone.
On rock, on beach, on foaming tide
Her timbers were scattered far and wide.

The hearts that throbbed with life's glad bound
Are silent now, save one, a child ;
Whom when the passing fisher found,
He oped his little hand and smiled,
And lo ! in the tiny palm there lay
A gold cross, moist with salt sea-spray.

How true that men are pilgrims all
Upon this world's wild, restless sea.
The mast'ring Passions' sudden squall
Shatters the soul : secure is he
Who grasps the Cross, and through the strife
Thus grasping, ever findeth life.

M. J. MacMahon.

Keiskamma.¹

WHERE the gorgeous aloes grow,
There the hidden sources flow,
Cold and pure as molten snow,
Of the sweet Keiskamma.

Where the halcyon builds her nest
'Neath the fern-tree's nodding crest,
Kissed by breezes from the west,
Flows the sweet Keiskamma.

Where the Amatolas² stand,
Guardians grim of Kaffirland,
Gurgling o'er its silver sand,
Flows the bright Keiskamma.

Winding 'mid mimosa glens,
Rocky banks and reedy fens,
By the tiger's hidden dens,
Glides the pure Keiskamma.

Where the furious torrents dash
O'er the rocks with deafening crash,
Ever onward, wild and rash,
Rolls the bright Keiskamma.

¹ A river bordering Cape Colony and Kaffirland.

² Mountains where the Keiskamma rises.

Where the willow branches bend,
And to earth their shadows lend,
Here its crystal waters wend—
Beautiful Keiskamma.

Through long valleys soft and green,
'Neath a cloudless heaven serene,
Glittering in its silver sheen,
Flows the clear Keiskamma.

Where the rugged rocks protrude,
And disturb its placid mood,
'Neath the shadowy yellow-wood,
Breaks the pure Keiskamma.

Where the river-horses splash,
And the foaming breakers dash
'Gainst the rocks with mighty crash,
Sweeps the bright Keiskamma.

Here, though sinking fast away,
For its waters may not stay,
Lovely as throughout its way
Is the bright Keiskamma.

Then at last its journey o'er,
Where it seeks the wild sea-shore,
'Midst the mighty ocean's roar,
Dies the sweet Keiskamma.

George E. Bulger.

Sunrise.

FRESH from a plunge in the sequestered pool,
This bosky hollow holds as in a cup,
And freed from lingering languors of the night,
By the delicious chill of dim-lit depths,
I stand awhile upon its reedy brink,
And with an eager and awakened gaze
Watch how the cloudless morn like some fair flower
Unfolds its splendours.

Autumn's lagging sun
Still lingers to o'ertop the wooded slope
Behind me, leaving undisturbed awhile
The slumb'rous dusk of the beshadowed pool ;
But half the bush-grown hill that mounts beyond
Is mellowed with a mantling garb of gold,
And o'er its rock-strewn summit's soaring ridge
Expands the sunlit azure, pale and pure.
A breath of primal freshness seems to stir
In the soft eddies of the morning air,
As if old Earth in some awaking dream
Had won again the gladness of her youth.
Borne from the bush, the wood-dove's crooning note
Hints of a hidden peace surpassing speech,
And the gay pipe and thrill of many a bird
Lends utterance to the joyance of the hour !

O, miracle of morning ! ever new,
As on the first sweet dawn in Paradise ;
O glad tranquillity, whose healing thrill

No other hour in weary hearts can wake !
Soft steals the golden sunlight down the slope,
As it would catch the dark pool unaware.
Bush after bush its glowing kiss receives,
And grey old thorn-trees grasp it eagerly
In their rough arms, as though its warm embrace
Might bring back verdure to each withered bough
And now the leader of the shining herd
Sets a shy foot upon the crumbling bank,
And straight the leaden water is bespread
With a swift dawn and flush of wavering light
That weaves a smile across its sullen front,
Like Hope surprising some despairing soul.
Spread, sunshine ! o'er the gladdened waters spread,
Until each lurking shadow is displaced ;
And take as thanks the incense offering
Of slowly drifting vapour-wreaths that smoke
From its sun-smitten surface. Come at last
Where I that sing of thee stand, and through my frame
Strike a quick ecstasy of sensuous bliss.
Strike through the flesh and reach my inmost soul,
And slay its shadows with thy glorious light !
Pure from the pool, anointed by thy beams,
And soul-fed with sweet visions of the morn.
The better shall I live and work this day,
Feeling through hours of toil remembered thrills
Of sunlight kisses, soft and warm as love's.

Herbert Tucker.

A Prayer for Rain.

O COME, reluctant rain !
For whose approach parched veld and failing spring,
And every living thing,
How long have looked in vain.

The farmer, day by day,
With darker brow watches his dying crops ;
The burnt and barren slopes
Where his starved cattle stray.

The maiden in her bower
Wishes the pity-laden tears that spring
From her soft heart might bring
Help to each pining flower.

And Spring is in the land !
Ah, ruthless rain ! canst thou unmoved behold
The bronzed bud unfold
A pale, beseeching hand ?

By inward power impelled,
Must the young leaf to loveliest life be born
Only to die forlorn,
Thy gracious drops withheld ?

The snowy-blossomed pear
Scatters a mimic shower at every gust ;
Wilt thou to dew her dust
Naught from thy treasures spare ?

And shall yon willow, fain
At the stream's glass to deck her bending head,
Droop o'er its empty bed
Her budding boughs in vain ?

The winds on circling wing
Through the wide heaven seek for thine hidden track :
Baffled they turn them back,
And dust is all they bring.

Or should the southern gale
From ocean's fields have filched a cloudy flock,
With barren mist they mock
The thirst of hill and vale.

Or if on fiery noons
Some thund'rous pile a tragic front uprears,
In a few blistering tears
Its brief-lived passion swoons.

Art thou for ever fled
In wrath for gifts misspent by men of yore,
Heedless to catch and store,
Thy showers freely shed ?

Nay then, too angry rain,
With pity for earth's blameless herbs be stirred :
For sake of beast and bird
Come back to us again !

Come back ! and coming bring
No scanty dole meted with miser hand,
But to the beggared land
A bounteous largess fling.

And ah ! what rose could yield
To my sick sense, surcharged with dust and heat,
A fragrance half as sweet
As smell of moistened field !

Rather mine ears had heard,
Waking, the swish of rain like surging seas
Sound through the swaying trees
Than blithest song of bird ;

And fairer to mine eyes
Some frowning dawn, rain-drenched and tempest torn,
Than this soft azure morn
Breathing of Paradise !

Herbert Tucker

The Twilight Hour.

Nor in the noise and glare of day :
The clamour of the crowded way :
Comes any voice to me.
'Mid the harsh world's distracting hum
My heart is dull, my lips are dumb,
No dreams my soul may see.

But when afar from street and mart,
In eve's hushed hour I walk apart,
While in the paling west
The sunset fire's last smouldering brand
Sheds a faint lustre o'er the land,
To light it to its rest ;

While in the zenith's deepening blue,
Some bold-eyed star has leapt to view,
 First in the field of night ;
Whose brightening beacon-flame inspires
A growing host of kindred fires
 Soft stealing into sight ;

When all the misty vale is still,
Save for the cricket's ceaseless trill,
 The chorus of the vlei,
The watch-dog's bark, the low of kine,
And lesser sounds too faint and fine
 For the coarse ear of day ;

(O hallowed hour, unearthly fair !
O stainless deeps of purple air !
 O silver stars on high,
Watching with all-compassionate gaze
Those who along earth's dusky ways
 Wander alone, as I !)—

Then, floating down some starry beam,
A glorious thought, a golden dream,
 Falls on my heart like dew ;
And fancy's sun-besmitten flowers,
That languished through the noontide hours,
 Lift their sweet heads anew !

And tones of earth's pathetic strain
Are wafted through my wakened brain ;
 And from the shadowy skies—
O hush ! O hark ! and thou shalt hear,
Echoed from shining sphere to sphere,
 The Eternal Harmonies !

Herbert Tucker.

The Three Kingdoms.

O MOONLIT land of Might-have-been !
Where long my 'trancéd feet have strayed,
Lured by rich vistas, vaguely seen
Through many`a velvet-shadowed glade.

Of sheltered vales of virgin peace,
And dewy meadows of delight,
And flashing streams, and shimmering seas,
And summits soaring out of sight ;

While wraith-like over hill and dell
A sighing wind for ever goes,
Whose music in its lull and swell
A note of witching sadness knows :

With steadfast will I turn my eyes
From all your silver mystery :
I list no more the breeze that sighs
Its sweet regret from tree to tree.

For there is poison in your breath,
And madness in your moaning breeze ;
And hidden swamps invite to death,
And pale shapes lurk amid the trees :

And many a noble heart and brave,
Lured by your beauty's syren snare,
Has found a vain, inglorious grave,
Stricken by your miasmic air.

.

The Kingdom of What-is is mine,
Though all too narrow seems its bound.
The honest day doth round me shine :
My feet are set on solid ground.

And so, disdainful of regret,
I yield my sword and give parole
Not to o'erpass the limits set
By conquering fate for my control.

My little round erect I tread,
Or bend my back in humble toil,
Striving to win my spirit's bread
From out the stern, unfruitful soil.

Yet gracious hours my Kingdom hath,
When Love's warm sunlight o'er it lies,
And Beauty's blossoms fringe my path,
And Joy sheds music from the skies.

And hush ! at moments rare and high
Some opal gleam of morning dew,
The glory of some sunset sky,
With secret gladness thrills me through.

Some cloudland temple up the blue
Lifting its dome of dazzling white,
Some wild bird's call, some wild-flower's hue
Surprises me with strange delight—

With whispers of some hidden bliss
Which Nature's earlier children know,
And to the dwellers in What-is
By hint and symbol darkly show.

And like the breeze that heralds morn
Hope through my heart anew doth sweep ;
And to my quickened brain are borne
Strains sweet as music heard in sleep ;

.

And, rich with endless recompense
For Life's poor, stinted gifts, I see
In vision through the veil of sense
The mystic Kingdom of May-be !

Herbert Tucker.

The Forget-me-not.

DRIFTING adown life's rapid stream,
And musing on man's lot,
Methought, upon the wave-worn bank,
Bloomed a Forget-me-not.
Quickly I drew me to the shore,
And culled the little flower.
Ah ! ever in my mem'ry lives
The rapture of that hour.

But soon the sweet blue pass'd away,
Too swiftly fled my dream ;
And now my bark drifts slowly on,
Down the dark, lonely stream.
Only above a soft light shines,
And whispers to my heart—
Place not thy love on aught below
From which thou soon must part.

Nor weep thou o'er thy faded flower ;
It has but passed on high.
The tender blue thou deemest lost,
Beams on thee from the sky.
Then pray to Him, who reigns above,
That when this life is o'er,
Thou safe may'st find thy flow'ret sweet
Blooming on heaven's fair shore.

“ *Mu.* ”

The Voice.

THERE is a wailing voice which cries
 For ever from the ocean,
 When the great angry waves arise,
 In long low lines against the skies,
 And, with a sullen motion,
 Dash themselves against the rocks,
 Raising a cloud of foam, which mocks
 Their sullenness—then falling, dies.

Or when the moon, with radiant face,
 Shines on the sea's broad breast,
 And woos her with such tender grace,
 That, yielding to the soft embrace,
 She sinks entranced to rest ;
 And a soft sleep steals over all,
 Unbroken, save by the sea-gull's call,
 As he seeks his watery nest.

Out, out afar he wheels his flight,
 Where the sky and waters meet,
 Till, like a speck in the waning light,
 Fading away he is lost to sight,
 'Mid shadows dim and fleet ;
 While from the ocean, calm and deep,
 A cool soft mist doth slowly creep,
 And shrouds the mountain's feet.

And when the wind moans drearily,
Among the leafless trees,
In storm or calm, by land or sea,
Still that same voice comes unto me,
Borne on the wings of the breeze :
“ Change and decay : change and decay :
All that is earthly fadeth away.”

“ *Mu.*”

Sonnets of the Cape.

I.

The Oak Avenue, Cape Town.

OFF, when my feet at evening homeward tread
The stately cloisters of the oak along,
My fervent soul breaks into grateful song,
And I a glad, rapt worshipper am led.
God, what a glorious prospect is outspread !
Impersoned nature here hath built her shrine :
On yon great altar sacrifice divine
She offers to her Maker. On the head
Of the majestic peak upon the west,
Her favoured seat, at eve oft sitteth she,
Soothing the busy city into rest,
Whilst the sun setting lights the golden sea.
Here, in thy fane, bright Presence, I divest
My heart of lower thoughts, and bow to heaven and
thee.

11.

Night.

Dost thou not love, O angel of the night,
Above all others this fair southern land ?
For thou hast gemmed its skies with lavish hand,
With rarest stars and constellations bright.
Shines not its vestal moon with purer light ?
Hath not its galaxy more lustrous hue,
While star-clouds, set in heavens more deeply blue,
Still gladden ours, as erst Magellan's sight ?
O would that while the old grey mountains sleep
There might be silence in the which to find
Grand music ! But if joyous creatures keep
Perpetual chorus, shall my captious mind
Object ? Creation's harmonies lie deep,
But to the soul attuned the parts are well combined.

G. Longmore.

After a Storm.

MORNING has come upon us,—from the day
Has rolled each darkling cloud, the orient view
Unveils with gorgeous sun, and deep clear blue.
But ocean riots still ;—in ponderous play
Thousands of heavy surges plunge away,
Dazzling with snow-white foam, or swiftly woos
Iris to paint all brightly tinted hues.
Strangely fair magic, 'mid their shivered spray,
Around us many a little whale-bird skims,
Dipping its tiny bosom in the deep,

Then instantly uprises blithe and high,
Even as the heart unthralled by earthly things
Will walk this troubled earth, yet ever keep
Its dearest home up in the azure sky.

E. B. Watermeyer.

Ideal Beauty.

PAINT me a picture where the golden hair,
Like sunlight, falls around the chiselled face
Of Grecian imaging ;—limn me the grace
Of spiritual beauty, jewel rare,
In features human yet divinely fair :
Let, through the dark-blue splendour of the eye,
Ethereal Hope shine star-like with chaste Love,
And on the brow a wisdom from above,
And on the lip a happy secret lie,
Fraught with the spirit's sweetest sorcery ;
Suffuse her face with Music, and the charm—
The animated glow of lofty Thought ;
Let Cynthia's mien, with stately mildness fraught
And queenly grace, adorn th' ideal form ;
And let it stand on some green isle of bliss,
Where seraphs stoop to woo her witching kiss.

“ Kappa.”

Words.

"WORDS are the coin of fools," so spake the sage ;
" But tables of the wise, whereon they count
The golden gems of thought, and keep the page
Of reckoning." So, brother, be the amount
Of all thou sayest or shalt say to men
The product of a pure, truth-seeking mind,
And symbols of deep thought, tried and refined,
Won from the mine of rich experience ; then
Shall all thy words be gold, and will outlast
The eating rust of Time, and men will say,
When thou art dead—looking upon thy past—
" This man hath earned him a fair name for aye ! "
And in the inmost shrine of memory
They'll rear a precious monument for thee.

" Καρφα."

A Sonnet.

MAN seems a waif cast on the stream of time,
That bears him onward to the unknown shore ;
That longed for, feared, dread, mysterious clime,
Toward which all hasten—to return no more.
Yet not so helpless is he as he seems,
Nor void of power to guide life's barque aright,
If Faith sits at the helm, and Hope's bright beams
Shine o'er the troubled waters when 'tis night,
Guiding and cheering like a beacon light,
Till peace is gained and life's cares gone like dreams.
Thence looking back o'er Time's brief, troubled way,
How vain must seem each earthly joy or care !
This thought should cheer us on from day to day,
To work and wait, to bear and to forbear.

T. McCall.

Sonnet.

SLOW fades the sunlight from each lonely hill,
And the pale half-moon paints with shadowy hue
The sleeping earth ; how soon doth night renew
Watch o'er a world—so passionless, so still !
So free from all the turbulent thoughts that fill
And thrill the human soul, deep hid from view !
Oh ! would that we poor, tired mortals, too,
Might seek and find repose. Ah ! not until
We learn, through life, to know and understand
The million chords—struck by some unseen hand
On the responsive, yearning soul of man—
Strange and conflicting since the world began ;
Then all of beauty, truth, and love will find
Abiding echo in our heart and mind.

Ralph Renaude.

The Digger's Song.

OH, mates, the veldt is brown and bare,
And drought is on the land ;
But beneath lie the glittering veins of gold,
Like the cords in this broad brown hand.
Then dig for the glittering gold !
Dig for the wealth untold !
Dig with a fire that can never tire,
Down, down to the glittering gold.

Oh, mates, we left some living friends
Away across the sea ;
But my sweetheart here, in the brown earth's breast,
Is dearer far to me.

Then hurrah for the glittering gold !
Hurrah for the wealth untold !
We'll win it, we'll spend it, we'll drink it,
we'll lend it,
We'll live for the glittering gold.

My sweetheart's hair is yellow, bright
As the sun in yonder sky ;
But shy my sweetheart is, and dark
The place where she does lie.

Then drink to the glittering gold !
Drink to the wealth untold !
Drink deep and long, with laughter and
song,
Drink, drink to the glittering gold !

My sweetheart's bright as the rising sun,
And cold as the waning moon ;
And hard as the stones in the water-course
'Neath the dust and glare of noon.

Then a health to the glittering gold !
A health to the wealth untold !
A health, my lads, to the fairest of maids,
A health to the glittering gold !

Amy Sutherland.

The Briton's Homeland.

(A Colonist's Imperial Song.)

SONS of Britannia ! scattered wide,
Wherever rolls blue ocean's tide ;
Sons of the men who proudly bore
Fair Freedom's flag to each far shore ;
Ye, who yet round the homeland clinging,
Hear History's echoes grandly ringing ;
Ye, who on many a distant coast,
Your British name still fondly boast—
Say, shall your ancient country be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea ?

A thousand years have known her name !
A thousand fights attest her fame !
Around her island throne there runs
The blood of myriads of her sons !
The light of Freedom gilds her story,
The Patriot's service seals her glory !
Fierce is the loyal flame that fires
The worthy sons of worthy sires !
Nay, never shall our country be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea.

Let but the foeman speak the word,
Let war's wild shriek but once be heard ;
Forth from the sheath the sword shall spring,
From land to land the cry shall ring !
Peace shall her spell impose no longer,

Honour than gain shall prove the stronger.
Fealty and faith, our strength of yore,
Shall fearless face a world once more ;
Nor ever shall our country be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea.

Hark ! through old England's world-wide bounds,
The shout of love and succour sounds :
From vast Acadia's woodland vales,
From far Australia's golden dales,
From India's many-peopled lands,
From Southern Afric's struggling bands ;
Wherever English foot hath trod,
Or English knee bends low to God,
They say that ne'er our land shall be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea.

O England ! home of homes, we swear,
While we the claims of sonship share,
Whilst thou to us art staunch and true,
Shall we to thee give royal due.
For thee with earth's rude powers contending,
Our hearts and arms their strength are spending.
Thy tongue we speak, thy laws we spread,
Through savage realms thy rights we shed ;
Nor e'er shalt thou, our country, be
Shorn of thy rank by land or sea.

O'erweening foes may band their might—
Our steadfast Isle stands firm to fight !
Her homes no victor-hosts despoil,
No hostile foot e'er shames her soil.
Deep are the constant seas that lave her,

Close bound the British hearts that save her.
One arm ! one hope ! one thought ! one soul !
Sworn fast to keep her Empire whole !
Nay, never shall old England be
Shorn of her rank by land or sea !

Anonymous.

Empire Day.

(*May 24th.*)

LOVE we our Motherland,
The Eden home of mighty realms to be,
The nation-teeming isle ;
Despite her scowling strand,
She wears the soaring glance, the victor's smile—
Radiant, storm-ridden, as the meteor free,
An opal dawn set in a night of sea.

World-warder fitly laid
Upon the azure margin of the earth,
Amid the wave's wide swirl,
Amid the tempest's raid,
For civic right and manhood's worth
To testify thro' Time's tempestuous whirl,
She sped the vital spark whose kindling ray
Clove the long night that broke to Freedom's day.

Firm rides the anchored barque,
With iron grip defying wind and wave,
Safeguarding all within ;
Above, the storm hangs dark,
Around, the seething waters rage ;

Fearless she meets the elemental din ;
Fearless they rest who braved the tempest's power,
Contrasting present peace with danger's hour.

Deep calleth unto deep ;
In happy unison the waters roll
About the channelled earth ;
Beneath the sun-scorched steep,
Around the ice-embattled Pole,
They chant one anthem from creation's birth,
Still testifying to the eternal sun :
" For power and for glory we are one."

Firm-rooted thrives the oak ;
In goodly fellowship its parts endure,
Each minister to each ;
From lashing tempest's stroke
In winter's icy grasp secure,
Still eloquent the genial law to teach—
" So sun and cloud their timely succour give,
In loyal brotherhood we stand and live."

So may our England stand,
Fruitful, strong-rooted, fair in branch and stem,
A full and perfect whole ;
Such as assailing hand
May not provoke or dare contemn,
Or foul the calm that marks her mild control ;
With one strong will confronting all mischance,—
Her peace sure warrant for the world's advance.

For strong and staunch and true,
Strongest in peril, true to loftiest ends,
For freedom and for right,
She the world's champion grew,
And still the freeman's cause defends ;
While all the storied Past's resplendent night,
'Mid thrilling echoes of the world's acclaim,
Glows with the starry wonder of her fame.

Such heritage is ours,
A royal lineage, a knightly trust,
A world-enthralling name :
She that so richly dowers
Her children, bids them but be just
And true and steadfast to the parent's fame,
Keeping enshrined, whatever chance betide,
Old England's glory in her children's pride.

Prize we that golden life,
The woven web of splendid memories,
The legend glory-lit ;
In deeds of valiant strife,
In amplest fruit of highest enterprise,
In heaven-blest energies the word is writ ;
For worthy sons who guard her high renown
Full worthy she to wear the Imperial crown.

J. Gill.

In Memoriam.

(*Alfred Tennyson*, obit 1892.)

FAREWELL, great bard, a glorious memory now—
For all who knew thy spell,
The circling Moon upon thy dark'ning brow
Laid fit farewell.

Rightly thou wouldst that no unseemly tears
Should mar thy closing day—
The laurelled victor 'mid acclaiming cheers
Should pass away.

More fit the note of praise, the reverent boast,
To sound his passing knell,
Who sang of all we love and cherish most,
And sang so well :

Who filled a nation's heart with quickening fire
Of white-robed Virtue's lore,
Who wrought sweet music from his Saxon lyre,
Unheard before :

Who drew our footsteps to the shining heights
Above earth's misty zone,
Where shafts break ever from the crystal lights
About the Throne :

Who weighed in faithful scales the knightly mood,
Set true for peace or strife,
The jewel worth of gracious womanhood,
Man's light of life :

Who loved his land with passion high and just,
Nor feared, whate'er should fail,
That she, who bears the great world's sacred trust,
Would still prevail.

Farewell, the banner of thy country's pride
Enshrouds thy mortal frame.

In grateful hearts of myriads shall abide
Thy deathless name.

J. Gill.

Vasco da Gama.

*(Christmas, 1497.)*¹

THEY were sick at heart and weary, they were tired of
wind and wave,
They saw no beauty in the sea, it seemed to them their
grave ;
Two moons had grown and gone again since they had
looked their last
Upon the mount whose beetling brow braves the
Antarctic blast ;
Morn after morn had found them still one speck upon
the sea,
Eve after eve had left them yet all landless on the lee :
And ever as the day arrived more sad, and stern, and
strange
The ocean seemed to be to them ; it bore no other
change.

¹ Port Natal was discovered by the great navigator, Vasco da Gama, on Christmas Day, 1497, and was accordingly named by him "The Land of the Nativity."

And ever as the night came more lonely, lost, and drear
Those seamen felt, as northward, ho ! their course they
 strove to steer.

For all that those old mariners around them heard or
 saw
Seemed more and more from olden things their present
 life to draw—
New stars that bore no meaning ; new birds with
 mournful cries—
The very brine, so deep and dark, was foreign to their
 eyes ;
While as the days and weeks flew on, and seasons came
 and went,
Alone on that untravelled sea the snail-like hours were
 spent.
No wand'rer o'er an austral wild, no desert-planted
 palm,
Could more completely be possessed of isolation's
 charm ;
For on the vacant surges of that great southern deep
None but this band of voyagers fell on Christmas-Eve
 asleep.
Oh ! ye that now in giant barks o'er subject oceans
 speed,
Give to the men that dared them first their peril-
 purchased meed.
Oh ! ye to whom in later times the sea brings few scant
 fears,
Honour as best befits their fame those staunch old
 pioneers.

They had left remote behind them—like a memory
growing dim,
The shores of Spain—imperial Spain—power, great,
and proud, and grim.
They had seen, discreetly distant, the false Moor's
gloomy realm,
While with a sign devout they guarded well the willing
helm ;
And many tales of torture and of death were that night
told
By men whose hearts beat hotly with the hates they
learnt of old.
Then as the sun rose higher, during many a long, long
day,
They crawled along a coast that never tempted them to
stay,—
Where sandy shores lay bleaching, stark, beneath a
fervid sky ;
Where burnished seas, unruffled, but racked the aching
eye ;
Where rivers, wide and torpid, crept through banks of
forest gloom,
And breathed across the tainted beach the vapours of
the tomb ;
Where, under Palma's lofty steep, the rock-thrown
shadows rest ;
Or where Biafra's friendly bight bends to the mystic
west ;
All down those links of sullen capes ; all down that
stricken strand,
Where Nature stood with callous front and man with
hostile hand ;

With bodies never weary, and with spirits never faint,
They sped all trustful in the care of Heaven and guardian saint.

Oh ! how these sailors' simple hearts with pious hope
beat high

When first they saw the sacred Cross hung in the
southern sky ;

And soon the gladdening tidings had leapt from lip
to lip,

That Heaven itself was smiling on the devious voyaging
ship.

Deep was the joy that crowned their hopes when high
above them reared,

Wreathed in its folded films of fog, the mountain bold
and weird ;

The mountain under whose bleak brow the great seas
bask or break,

And round whose rock-built basements now vast fleets
their courses take ;

Nor was the Christmas-tide far off when they again
set sail,

Bent still, the good Lord helping them, the Indian
coast to hail.

Rounding the sea-girt Cape, whose crest rose high
above the mast ;

Rounding L'Agulhas' sandy point, seen from the mast
at last ;

Keeping all closely to the shore, for fear of surge and
tide,

The little bark clung to her course, that cruel coast
beside.

She passed the gaping cliffs through which the Knysna's
waters flow,
And swung secure in sheltered coves when southern
gales did blow.
Yon yawning bay whose leafless shore was then all
bleak and bare,
Whose busy waters now are thronged by ships that
gather there,—
At last behind them passed from sight, and then for
days and weeks,
Driven far out by baffling winds, fighting with stub-
born leaks,
They tossed, the prey of bitter storm, from ruthless
wave to wave,
They strove with slowly deepening gloom their sinking
ship to save,
Till in the depth of mute despair they knelt upon the
deck,
And prayed that JESU—Mary's Son—would keep their
lives from wreck.
They prayed, and as their souls thus spoke, hope in
their bosoms rose,
And many a weary eye that night in sleep could calmly
close.
A flush upon yon eastern sky where glows the Magi's
star,
A bank of blackness looming large, as land that heaves
afar,
Through throbbing hearts a sudden thrill, that quickens
as the morn
Breaks with its summer glory on the day when Christ
was born.

Oh ! joy to our long weary hearts ; oh ! hopes of getting home,
Oh ! goodly sun, and kindly sea, and tender sky, God's dome,
Oh ! land, whose pleasant lineaments, to these our dazzled eyes,
Are glorious as were Canaan's heights to Israel's thankful spies.
Softly the bush-swathed shore arose in backward sloping hills,
Whose swarthy sides hid rushing streams or bent to rippling rills.
Softly those serried bluffs disclosed deep valleys winding far,
'Mid gloom of tufted woodland, or stern frown of naked scar.
Softly the mottled heights upsprung in ever-rising tiers,
Whose rifted marge far westward seen in distance disappears.
Well might those simple-hearted men, as towards the coast they drew,
With pious unction bless the land thus bursting on their view.
Well might they say that surely 'twas God's purpose true and kind,
That they upon great Jesu's Day this brave new land should find.

. J. R.

Autumn Sunshine.

THE sunshine went a-straying
One gracious harvest morn,
While autumn winds were playing
Among the yellow corn.

The reapers' necks and faces
She dyed deep berry-brown,
And draped in mystic graces
The smoky toiling town.

She kissed in sober sadness
The flowers too soon to fade,
And pierced in merry gladness
The orchard's bosky glade.

The leaves, before her shrinking,
Disclosed the apples green,
That blushed red-ripe for thinking
How idle they had been.

She dropped, in noon-day dreaming,
Her necklace in a pool,
And left the jewels gleaming
Amid its waters cool.

She climbed with motion queenly
The mountain's rugged breast,
And slept, brief space ! serenely
Calm on its cloudy crest.

Thence on the sea descending,
She trod with footsteps bold ;
For ever westward trending,
A track of heaving gold.

At last, with travel drooping,
 She sought her crimson bed,
 And forth the stars came trooping
 To watch the world instead.

T. W.

May Morning, Natal.

ARE the days so long and the nights so dreary,
 That we must yearn for the bygone years ?
 Are souls so sad and hearts so weary
 That men have time for tears ?

In English orchards the birds are singing ;
 In English valleys the grass is green ;
 In English lanes the lads are bringing
 May to crown their queen.

Yet all the gold of an orange garden,
 And all the green of the sugar-cane,
 Prompts a pitiful prayer for pardon
 Whenever we complain.

And in English homes, if the merry-making
 Would lag a little, our Loved might say,
 " Somewhere May-day is breaking
 For Someone far away."

Jack Saville Judd.

Memory.

THE muse in solitude was nurst,
In solitude her songs began ;
From some lone burning bosom burst
The tide of song, that as it ran
In glory o'er the golden sands
Of memory back to childhood's prime,
Revived the drooping shadowy bands
Of feelings, tender or sublime ;
Thoughts, images, beloved or feared ;
Tears, smiles, regrets, whate'er the wing
Of Time had scattered first, then seared,
Or left in darkness withering—
All were renewed in that blest hour
Of boundless passion, boundless power.

The Past—no more a dreary waste,
Which the sad spirit feared to roam—
Now charmed the wanderer from her haste
To seek with hope a distant home.
She now beheld in Fancy's light
Serene, eternal, ever new,
Bowers, skies, more beautiful and bright
Than her aspiring ardour drew
In dreams, for coming years of bliss ;
And all her own. No mortal power,
Nor chance, nor change, can snatch from this
Clear mirror one enchanted flower ;
No fears disturb, no sorrows wait
In this fair world redeemed from fate.

John Fairbairn.

To the Sea.

O ! THOU wild, tempestuous ocean,
 Well communes my heart with thee,
 In the ever-ceaseless motion,
 In the changing hues I see :
 How I love thee,
 Emblem of the soul to me :

In thy restless, anxious tossing,
 In thy struggles to be free,
 Doth my spirit, vexed with crossing,
 Boundless ocean, beat with thee ;
 Ever varying,
 How our fitful moods agree :

Dashing o'er the rocks opposing,
 Lashing with thy wave the shore ;
 Now in gentle calm reposing,
 Now convulsed with anger o'er ;
 How I love thee,
 Nearer, dearer than before.

Now I know the ebb and flowing,
 Sunny morn and low'ring eve ;
 Know the coming and the going,
 How to joy, and how to grieve :
 In my knowing,
 Ocean, thou too canst believe.

To the murmur of thy sadness
Breathes my heart a kindred sigh ;
Thy serenity of gladness
Knew I too in days gone by.
Yes, I love thee
With a strange intensity.

Salt thy brine, but teardrops salter
Flow to mingle with thy tide ;
Burning thoughts from lips that falter,
As I wander by thy side,
I can tell thee ;
Tell to thee, and none beside.

Art thou ruthless in destroying ?
Time is yet a wilder sea ;
With our hopes of youthhood toying,
Scatt'ring all with careless glee ;
Till he leaves us
Wrecks of what we used to be.

Yet the flower of hope is blooming
On one rock above the spray,
All the distant East illuming,
Glows the promise of the day ;
Time's dark ocean
Lit with an eternal ray.

“ *Thistle.* ”

Lament of the Trek Ox.

INSPANNED, early and late,
With the galling yoke on my neck—
To toil and strain 'neath the stinging lash
Till I drop—is my wretched fate !

O man ! with the horny hand,
O man ! with the stony heart,
Ere the sun goes down, if but for an hour,
For dear God's sake, " outspan."

For days and nights I've pulled
With my mates your fleecy load,
Through parched Karoo and sapless bush,
Till we heard the cry of the wild seamew
And the breakers thundering loud.

The breeze from the water cool
Gave life to our throbbing heart,
And we trekked again with right good will,
To drink of the promised draught.

In vain, once more in vain,
For tied to the hateful yoke,
Through the chilly night on the iron road
Till the day began to break.

On the cold and barren strand
We lay the weary night,
Till the God-sent sun arose once more
On our limbs,—like iron bands.

With feet worn through, and wasted frame,
We stagger along the road ;
Arrived in the sharp and stony street,
We stand, while the men off load.

'Mid the rush of eager men,
As they hurry along the street,
We stand, and wonder what it means,
And bemoan our cruel fate.

All day without water or food
We pant in the blazing heat,
And visions dim of the shady wood
And river's cool retreat

Pass through our weary hearts,
Till the evening sun goes down,—
When the startling shot of the terrible thong
Hurries us out of the town.

“ Weary, and wounded, and worn,”
We stagger in front of the load,
And we stupidly wonder if men have hearts,
Or is there indeed a God ?

A God, all wise and good,
Who lists to His creature's cry ?
'Tis hard to be understood ;
To be born, and suffer, and die.

F. F.

To Young South Africa.

Lo ! a dream-shape in the distance beckoning on to
nobler deeds :

Up, my brethren, rise and follow where the star-wreathed
vision leads ;

Leave your toil of fruitless labour, vainly with o'er-
wearied hands

Weaving aye your web of fortune from the dull earth's
yellow sands,

Striving with your lofty talents to enslave yourselves
to clay,

Chaining spirits born for ages to the task-work of a day.

Toil !—but not for wasteful nothings ; toil !—but not
for self alone ;

This it is “ for ever rolling upwards still the rolling
stone ” ;

This it is the curse of Eden, still bequeathed from man
to man :

“ Strive but vainly,—work and gain not,” echoing aye
the angel's ban.

Yet upon this curse a blessing when the god-like human
will

Moulds it unto glorious purpose, and doth hallow all
the ill !

Never sainted prophet stricken prostrate on the burn-
ing sod,

Trembling 'neath the awful glory streaming from the
present God,

Heard in earthquake, flame, or stillness, aught more
holy than the truth
Echoed by our mother Nature from her dawn of early
youth
Through all ages—"Man is God-like—weak and erring,
suffering man,—
God-like in the thoughts he thinketh, God-like in the
deeds he can."

Yea ! and with the curse upon him, more he proves his
lofty birth
Than in yon old Eden dwelling, sated with the ease of
earth,
When he strives for men around him, battles for his
brother's right ;
When he spreads amid the darkness rays of never-dying
light—
Rays that calmly shining from him reach the weary
sufferer's breast,
Warm once more the frozen feelings, bringing ease to
his unrest ;
Rays whose widely-beaming brilliance shows all men
one brotherhood,
Man then only rightly human when he yearns for
human good.

Mighty nations then most glorious when their world-
wide cherished name
Is a succour to the helpless,—unto tyrants fear and
shame !

When their deeds have been of justice, mercies done
and wisdom spread,
Waking noble aspirations where the human soul seemed
dead ;
God-like then is human labour : brethren rend'ring
brethren blest,
Feel themselves divinely nurtured, know a God within
their breast.

Yet,—for ye have erred, my brethren,—ye have scorned
the blessed gift,
Wearying strength that is immortal in the selfish race
of thrift ;
Lo ! your dead religion's priesthood onward with your
earth-god reels !
Earthward, sacrificial victims ! Stain with blood the
chariot-wheels !
Perish there ; your work is ended, as your sordid work
ye chose,
Death, corruption, base oblivion, guerdon of your toils
and throes :
Worse yet than the senseless sluggard who his talent
laid in earth,
Thus to lower to dishonour all that proves man's primal
worth.

Veiling as a thing forgotten, hid from you in Nature's
tome,
This, as the broad sunlight blazing—" Elsewhere is
your spirit's home "—

Darkening the glorious vision which all men have felt
in youth,
Of majestic human grandeur blended quite with God-
like youth.
Who shall blush not, O my brethren, naming this his
fatherland,
Where no noble thoughts have been, where no noble
deed is plann'd ?
Nay, but earthworms wriggling onwards crawl unto a
heap of gold,
And an instant altar rises and a craven prayer is told.
Lo ! three centuries have vanished since the pennon
was unfurled
Wafting wisdom from the fountains welling in the
ancient world ;
Since the sacred Cross was planted at the baptism of
our land,
That it may enjoy communion with the Christian
nation's band.
Christians came ; and shrunk the savage from his
father's old abode,
For he knew no more the tenure on which earth is
held from God ;
Dwelling 'mid the brutes around him, scarce himself a
nobler brute,
All high thoughts of human greatness from his breast
torn by the root.
Then came men, our pilgrim fathers, noblest blood of
sunny France—
Broad-browed men of free-born spirit, lighted with the
eagle glance ;

Spoiled by bigot priest and despot of the broad lands
of their line,
Rich yet in the glorious freedom that dares know itself
divine :
Hither came they—welcomed hither by the gallant
Northern race
Whom they well might own for brethren, breast to
breast in close embrace—
Those staunch darers of the waters who first broke the
giant force
That would rule man's free convictions as the rider
guides his horse ;
Struggling and despairing never, till at length they
gained the war—
Spain, the hope of priest-led tyrants ; Holland, free-
dom's polar star.

Lo ! such union of such nations ! Gaze into the future's
scope,
Not in vain name these their country land of soul-
exalting hope !
Knowledge see they ever widening, man no longer
scorning man ;
Truth diffusing each to other, aiding the Creator's plan ;
Breaking free from earthly fetters, giant souls of thought-
ful men,
Meeting wisdom in their equals far beyond their former
ken,
Wisdom which they erst deemed falsehood, hated with
the hate of hell,
When their minds were cramped within them, shrunk
in earth-pride's narrow shell.

Better were it had old ocean swept the wave-tossed
ships away,
Than that from such large-souled fathers sprang the
pigmies of to-day ;
Stalking lords of all around us, blinded with our petty
pride,
Higher, maybe, than the savage whom we scoff at and
deride.
Where the deeds that we can point to worthy of our
father's name ?
Where the single gleam of glory in the darkness of our
shame ?
Where the broad and furrowed foreheads, watchers for
all human kind,
Radiant with the thoughtful paleness, signal of the
earnest mind ?

Anonymous.

Marguerite.¹

BORN of the moonlight, cradled in foam,
' Deep beneath Oman's waters
A pearl lay nestled within its home ;
Where the laughter of the sea-nymph's daughters
Came ringing along through the rock-roofed caves
Which they made their gladsome dwelling,
And shivered the crests of the wind-swept waves
That over their heads were swelling.

¹ Precious Pearl.

Down where the twilight is misty and green,
Where the gold sands cradle the amber,
Where the richest gems of the main are seen
And the snaky sea-weeds clamber ;
Where the sea-shells sing the songs they caught
When they roved on the seething billow,
Ere they laid them down, like a solemn thought,
To serve for the Peri's pillow ;

Close lay the pearl within its shell
Till the hand of the diver caught it,
And, tearing it forth from its natal cell,
To the glare of the daylight brought it.
Snatched from the home of its magic birth,
While the waters sobbed their sadness,
The song of the Peris rose to earth
From their happy homes of gladness :—

“ Child of the ocean, we Peris shall miss thee,
Gone from the cleft where thou usedst to hide ;
Never again shall the sea-weed kiss thee,
As it lazily swings in the murmuring tide ;
Never again, O child of the ocean,
Shall the song of the conches lull thee to rest,
As softly moving in dreamy motion
We rocked thee to sleep on our snowy breast.
But our wishes shall follow wherever thou goest,
Though far over mountain and sea thou shouldst
roam,
And, whate'er in thy new life befalls thee, thou knowest
We remember thee still in thy ocean home.”

So it wandered through many a land
From its ocean depths of azure ;
Lingering now by some tropic strand,
Now borne beside the glacier ;
Ever ablaze with the beauty's light
Which its wondrous birth had given,—
One had deemed it a seraph's tear-drop bright,
If the angels weep in heaven.

But at length it reached the long-sought rest
For which it had wandered far,
When I placed it upon my darling's breast,
Where it shone like the morning star ;
And yet, for all it gleamed so bright
As it lay in her bosom fair,
It blushed to find itself less white,
And glowed a ruby there.

Anonymous.

The Strength of Life.

THE wild waves dash on the storm-beat sands
In fierce, tempestuous glee ;
And the cold grey rocks are madly lashed
In colder, greyer sea ;
The fisherman's wife is on her knees,
And the laughing boy is still ;
For a frail bark strives in the surging main
To combat Nature's will.

The pain-pierced eyes are tearless,
And the suffering lips are white,
For aching heart and throbbing brain
Heave with tumultuous might.
Ah ! sad for the passionate soul,
Whose fierce, mad strength is vain
To stem the surging tide of woe,
Or vanquish and restrain.

But the wavelets creep on the sunlit shore,
Breaking in fitful glee ;
And the fisher-boy marks from the gleaming rocks
Shades on the azure sea ;
The mother sings to her sleeping babe
While the fisherman mends his net,
And a thousand storms have changed to calm
Since day arose and set.

For a noble truth and a peaceful trust
Shine in the earnest eye ;
And the passionate heart hath found the strength
That cannot fail or die.
Ah ! well if the lesson of life
Be learnt at a Saviour's feet,
And ours press the silver shore
Where Faith and Patience meet.

De Profundis.

THE dying sun, with mellow ray,
Illum'd the deep'ning gloom
Of carv'd apse and storied bay
And costly sculptur'd tomb.
On aisle and chapel, choir and shrine,
The morient beam delay'd ;
Its ling'ring beauty, half divine,
Upon the altar stray'd.

Before that altar knelt a man
Absorbed in earnest pray'r ;
His pallid face, with suff'ring wan,
Was overcast with care.
Fast, fast the eager tear-drops rolled
Adown his bronzed cheek,
His heaving bosom's sobs foretold
His very heart would break.

His harness, all of metal tried,
Was cunningly inlaid
With jewels rare, and by his side
His golden helm display'd ;
A silken scarf, of gorgeous sheen,
Upon his breast he wore,
And rev'rently, his hands atween,
A crucifix he bore.

“ My heart is black with sin ! ” he cried,
“ My soul can find no rest ;
Extend Thine arms of mercy wide
And take me to Thy breast.

Canst Thou deny one soul relief
 For whom Thy blood was shed ?
 Didst Thou not save the sorrowing thief
 E'en as death bow'd Thy head ? ”

Athwart the altar passed a glow
 From out the western heav'n—
 The Messenger of Peace, to show
 His guilt was all forgiven.
 Uprais'd in hope, his glazing eye
 With rapture's light was fired ;
 He sank before the Altar High,
 And in a smile expir'd.

.

For vespers rang the cloister bell ;
 The abbot with his train,
 Each from his solitary cell,
 Came slowly in amain ;
 The rising moonbeams softly broke
 Upon that prostrate head ;
 The solemn organ sweetly woke
 Its requiem for the dead.

“ *Omicron.* ”

Answered.

WEARY, with tired eyes that sought
Some answer to a hopeless thought ;
Sad, with remembrance of dead years,
That woke with the bright flush of morn,
But faded in a mist of tears
Before their promise could be born,—
I stood awhile upon the verge
Of a far-rolling sweep of sea,
Whose fading distance seemed to merge
Into the vast eternity.
The ghosts of things that had been dead,
Yet lived again ;
The salt of tears was on my tongue ;
The sound of bitter sobbing, wrung
From hearts which Joy had cursed and fled,
Was in my brain ;
And from the main,
Borne on a sudden tremulous breath
Of air that chilled me as the touch of death,
Came an exceeding bitter cry,
As of a soul in mortal pain :
“ All that is fair shall die ! ”
I did not know it was my own :
So the gloom deepened ; then there came,—
First in faint echoes from afar
That gathered, as an undertone,
In most hushed stillness, to one sound,—
The mention of an awful name :
And the same instant flashed around
The sudden glory of a risen star.

“Omicron.”

The Chief.

DOWN in the low, dim lands, where forest trees
Hung shadow curtains out across the sky,
And only branches whispering in the breeze
Awoke the echo's sigh ;
Down through the gardens, where dark shadows pass
Unchallenged and unhindered year by year,
Tottering, past the tufts of yellow grass,
He came—a Chief *pour rire*.
Lord of a land where famine lurked amid
The nibbled mealie-cobs that strewed the ground,
King of a realm where fell disease, half-hid,
Bred hideous shadows round.
Monarch, perhaps, of half a hundred huts,
One of the relics of a vanished day,
Hedged in with all the mockery that shuts
The king with feet of clay.
His garb ?—A blanket dragging in the sand
For kingly robes, a band of bark for crown,
Necklet of beads for royal insignia, and
A rein to belt his gown.
His retinue ?—A brother-relic strayed
Some steps behind, bearing a gourd with care,
Some remnant of humanity decayed,
With fat-anointed hair.
From shadows passing, shadow-ward they went ;
Nor gave me greeting, as I sat the while
Beside the looped-up doorway of my tent,
The tedium to beguile.

Only, it chanced, some tribesmen slouching by
Stiffened their backs, and turned to greet their
king

With ceremonious clapping, and a cry
That made the red rocks ring.

I turned, and caught the pride that lit his face,
The sudden majesty that fired his brain—
Old and forgotten stories of his race
Glowed in his eyes again.

Then, silence—and his eyes were veiled anew—
Stiffly, he hobbled onward as he came.

“Faith!” said I, musing as he passed from view—
“Is kingship but a name?”

Cullen Gouldsbury.

The Pace of the Ox.

WHAT do we know—and what do we care—for Time,
and his silver scythe,
Since there is always time to spare, so long as a man's
alive?—

The world may come, and the world may go, and the
world may whistle by,
But the pace of the ox is steady and slow, and life is
a lullaby.

What do we know of the city's scorn, the hum of a
world amaze,
Hot-foot haste, and the fevered dawn, and forgotten
yesterdays?—

For men may strain, and women may strive in busier
lands to-day,
But the pace of the ox is the pace to thrive in the land
of Veldt and Vlei.

The daylight breaks in the Eastern sky, and sinks to
sleep in the West ;
Thus it is that our days go by, bringing their meed of
rest.
The Future's hidden behind the veil, and the Past—is
still the past,
And the pace of the ox is the sliding scale that measures
our work at last.

The song of the ships is far to hear, the hum of the
world is dead,
And lotus-life in a drowsy year our benison instead—
Why should we push the world along, live in a world
of flame,
When the pace of the ox is steady and strong, and the
end is just the same ?

Cullen Gouldsbury.

The Minstrel.

LORD RONALD woo'd a noble maid
With many a loving look and vow ;
Full low she bowed her stately head,
And pain and shame were on her brow.

“ Think not, as many a maiden doth,
I spurn your love in wanton pride :
I would not do you this great wrong,
To wed you to a loveless bride :

“ And loveless must such bridal be,
For yest'reen in my father's hall
A minstrel won me with his song,
And holds me with his harp in thrall.

“ He sang of kings and courts and states,
They seemed my maiden wits above ;
He sang of war, my blood was chilled ;
And last of all his theme was love.

“ Then though to all he sang, he seemed
To sing to me, to me alone ;
His looks went through me like a flame,
My heart leaped up with every tone.

“ That heart is his, whate'er his state ;—
Nor name, nor race, is his I ween ;—
Yet can I ne'er another wed,
Should wedded life be crowned queen.”

And Lord Ronald he answered her,

Neither in wrath nor scorn :

“ No shame it is to any man,
Though lowly he be born ;

“ For greatness is not in the blood,
Nor worth in breadth of land ;
But who would live a noble life,
Must toil with head and hand ;

“ And ever he who proves his worth
Shall have the victor's prize,
Be it a grateful people's love,
Or the light of a maiden's eyes.

“ Then wed your minstrel if you will,
With feast and revel gay,
And mine shall be the gladdest heart
Upon your bridal day.

“ Yet grant one boon before we part,
Worth more than tongue can tell ;
Your harp hangs idle at your side,
List to my last farewell.”

Then on her maiden heart he dashed
In a full flood of song,
Now passionate, now calm and deep ;
He bore her soul along.

He ceased ; and from his lordly limbs
He cast his jewelled robe aside ;
The maiden leapt into his arms,
The minstrel's love, Lord Ronald's bride.

H. V. Ellis.

There let me lie.

DEAD, let them lay me in some spot like this
Between the young bush and hoary sea ;
Where earth's last child, the glistening silver sand,
Woos to its arms the last born ocean wave ;
Where there is joyous youth and nodding age
And strong mid-life, rejoicing in its strength,
Shielding the young and patient of the old ;
Where the sea sings, " The dead have restful ease."
And the land answers, " Till they rise in joy."
And there is sadness only for the sad.

There let me lie, while wavelets, prattling to me,
Tell me the tales their mother-waves have learned
In other climates and from other shores—
What eyes have looked upon the northern seas,
What oars have dipped into the northern streams ;
And if the northern eyes were dim with tears,
Or northern tongues made mention of a name
Which was not all a name in summers gone.

.
Ah ! might they tell me that from two brown eyes
The tears had fallen like a summer shower
Which does not hide the summer sun beyond :
Perchance—God knows my soul would have it so—
That other eyes were mirrored in the brown,
And smaller hands were dipped into the tide ;
Eyes that should love me for the love I bore,
And hands that should be stretched to meet my grasp
In the far future for the old love's sake.

There let me lie ; and let the joyous bush
Echo with voices of these southern shores,
Voices of winds that do the will of God,
Voices of storms that thunder from the heavens,
Voices of toil that bringeth peaceful ease,
Voices of birds that sing for very mirth,
Voices of hearts that sing for deeper joy,
Voices of men that whisper of their love
And read the silent answer of an eye.

So shall the warm sun's glory cherish me,
The sad sea charm, the glad earth gladden me,
And my dead heart still know the hearts of men.

H. V. Ellis.

A Plaint of the Sea.

EVER advancing, ever receding,
 Battling ever but never free,
Now roaring in anguish, now plaintively pleading,
 Sorrow there is on the ceaseless sea

Forced by the cruel winds that move
 To do the deeds that it would not do ;
Hate it not, if thou canst not love it ;
 False if it is, it would fain be true.

Oh, man ! dost thou never with slow, sweet smile
 Lure a frail heart to repose on thee,
Only to wreck it in passion or guile ?
 Say which is falser, thou, or the sea !

Go, thou who art by remorse oppressed,
 Seek the shore in some inlet lone,
 Old Ocean shall sing thy sorrow to rest,
 As he answers thee, sobbing out moan for moan.

Ever advancing, ever receding,
 Doomed to a deathless agony,
 Now roaring in anguish, now plaintively pleading,
 Hark to the song of the ceaseless sea.

Moan the First.

- " Gaily sped the fisher's boat,
 And cheerily sang the crew,
 And proud was I to bear them up
 On my bosom of smiling blue :
 Many and full were the hauls they made ;
 And they shouted in their glee,
 As I gladly, freed upon the best
 To the love-tipped into the sea.
 Their eyes were
 " All day they sailed ; at eve the sun
 Went down with a lurid glow,
 The night breeze rose with an angry howl,
 A storm began to blow ;
 No moon, no stars shone out above,
 Dark clouds o'ercast the sky ;
 So I dashed myself on the half-sunk shoal,
 To warn of the danger nigh.
- " 'Twas useless all, the helm soon gone,
 The boat struck heavily ;
 So I dashed the fishers upon the rock,
 To shorten their agony.

“ Next morn ere the sun rose in the sky,
I laid them on the sands ;
And writhed to hear the women wail,
To see them wring their hands ;
And they chid me, and called me the ‘ cruel sea ’ ;
But little I ween they know
That theirs is a short-lived misery,
But mine is an endless woe.”

Moan the Second.

“ The stars were dying in the sky
Which brightened to the morn ;
With weary mien and faded eye
There came a maid forlorn,
And, gazing in my silent depth,
O’er her wan face there spread
A look of sad hope as she sighed,
‘ There’s rest among the dead.’

“ I guessed her purpose, and I wailed,
And tossed my shaggy mane
To scare her, but she would not heed,
And I wailed and tossed in vain :
‘ He cannot come to me,’ she cried,
‘ But I can share his grave :
O God ! if there be a God, forgive ! ’
And she leaped in my sobbing wave.

“ Twice sank she in my stifling grasp,
Twice I raised her up again,
And then she sank to rise no more,
And I knew that my aid was vain ;

So I sang her a song of her happy youth
As I hugged her to my breast,
And deep in my halls 'mid flowers and shells
I rocked her tired spirit to rest.

“ The sun rose bright in heaven above
And gleamed on my glistening shore,
And my waves ran races landward still,
As they have from ever of yore ;
And the children call me the ‘ happy sea ’ ;
But little those young ones know,
That frolic, and prattle, and smile as I may,
In my heart there is only woe.”

H. V. Ellis.

In the Time of Drought.

THE spring went by, the summer came,
And still the people cried for rain ;
Day after day the sun arose
Over the hill a hard, bright flame,
A hard, bright flame it sank again
Under the sea from dawn to close
Without one cloud purple or rose :
The rivers scarcely dreamed along,
The water-wheels forgot their song,
By hill and dale the cattle died,
And drought and dearth reigned far and wide.

Then to their priest the people hied :
“ Proclaim a solemn fast,” they said,
“ Ere every one of us be dead ;
To-morrow let us do this thing ;

No man from dawn till evening
Shall speak or toil or eat or drink ;
But when the sun about to sink
Hangs just above the gilded wave,
Gather we all beside the sea,
And thou shalt pray before us all
The Lord of harvests graciously
To send the fruitful rain's downfall ;
So shall He hear and grant and save."

Silent and sad the old man heard,
Nodded assent, and spoke no word.
So all next day the land was still
By town and river, plain and hill ;
No stroke was struck, no word was said,
They sat like men who watch the dead ;
And when the sun above the wave
Just touched with gold his gleaming grave,
They gathered all beside the sea
And bowed the head and bent the knee ;
And the priest stood, stretched arms and prayed :
" Lord of the harvest, when to Thee
Thy smitten people bend the knee,
Oh ! pity their extremity ! "

Few words he prayed, they rose and went
And left him by the shore alone ;
And he, the last slow footfall gone,
Flung himself down upon his face
In a great agony, and strove
And prayed until his strength was spent ;
" Forgive them, Lord, that thus they cry

To Thee and cannot trust Thy love ;
Remember not against thy race
Their sin, nor leave them utterly."

The young moon grew to full and died,
And still the people cried for rain ;
And now the corn-lands far and wide .
Wave, golden liars, full of pride,
But empty of the friendly grain.
Then came the people to their priest,
Beseeching him to lend his aid,
If any gift of gold or beast
Would pleasure Him to whom they prayed,
Or even,—so weak they grew and wan—
Would any sacrifice of man ?
Perhaps that some had done some deed
Impious, or but for lack of heed ;
Would lot decide it, should he bleed ?

Silent and sad the old man heard,
A moment prayed, then spoke this word ;
" To-morrow, when above the plain
The first ray smites the golden grain,
And praise uprises through the land
From wave and breeze and plain and tree ;
Robed each in white, with palm in hand,
Gather we all beside the sea,
And there upon the yellow sand,
To all creation's harmony,
To God our cheerful burden raise,
And yield Him tribute of our praise
For all His works and all His ways ;
Then through the land from shore to shore

Let each his daily labour ply,
Until the sun, about to die,
Hangs just above his gilded grave ;
Then meet we by the sea once more
And feast till midnight by the wave ;
God loveth not to kill, but save."

They heard and went, and ere the morn,
White-robed, they gathered by the main
And silent waited for the dawn ;
Then as upon the golden grain
The sun his wave of splendour poured,
Led by their priest, with one accord
They hymned the glory of the Lord.

" Father of all who madest all,
And moulded all things to Thy will,
Who dost the plain with plenty fill,
Who dost withhold the rain's downfall ;
Thee we adore ; Thee we implore
Mark not we knew not good from ill,
Nor scorn our tardy song of praise
For all Thy works and all Thy ways."

So sang they and, departing, went
Each to his task in town or plain,
Until the dying sun again
His glory o'er the waters sent ;
Then met they, and with mirth and glee
Feasted till midnight by the sea ;
Passed homeward ; slept ; and rose, and saw
The soaked land steam from shore to shore.

H. V. Ellis.

Death.

IN Life's dim mists of morning thou dost seem
To Childhood's eye a giant vague and vast,
A shade across the dewy meadow cast,
A blot upon the level-darting beam.

Day comes apace, and like a fearful dream
Thou shrinkest ; and Youth smiles, deeming thee
past ;
And Manhood recks not of thee ; till at last
Thou comest again, a speck borne down the stream.

Larger thou growest, and we see thee now,
No foe, but one whose silent plying wing
Shall bear us from the swiftly-fading shore ;
Thou comest ; our head upon our breast we bow ;
And in our ears remembered voices ring ;
Thy arms enfold us ; and we know no more.

H. V. Ellis.

A Bar Harbour.

WHITE waves without, blue calm within—
What would we give that calm to win !
So sighs the wanderer, day by day
Gazing at Bluff and Bar and Bay.

White waves without, blue calm within—
Who cross the Bar that calm may win,
And, snug from waves' and gales' rebuff,
Look back on Bay and Bar and Bluff.

White waves without, blue calm within—
He tempts the Bar that calm to win :
If faint his heart or efforts are,
Farewell to Bluff and Bay and Bar.

.

Such are our lives ; through strife men win
From storm without to calm within ;
Some shrink, some fail ; ah ! few enough
Look back from Bay to Bar and Bluff.

H. V. Ellis.

The Erythrina Tree.

(A Carol of the Woods.)

BRIGHT, glorious Erythrina tree,
Queen of the forests near the sea,
Herald of springtide, wild and free.
Thy scarlet blossoms reared on high,
Above the woods in beauty lie,
Tinted in russet-purple dye ;
While morning beams in laughing glances
Are quivering amongst thy branches,
And glowing flowers as day advances.

Bright, glorious Erythrina tree,
Queen of the woodlands near the sea,
Haunt of the sunbird and the bee.
'Neath sunny skies they feast for hours,
Quaffing the nectar of thy flowers
Whose scarlet petals fall in showers.
On dark and amethystine wing,
Flitting from flow'r to flow'r they sing
Their joyous songs to thee in spring.
A shower of ringing notes on high,
Apparently from out the sky,
Descend to earth all merrily ;
While the cicada's ceaseless strain
From day to day—again, again—
Is heard through forest dell and lane,
Thrilling the woods, a wild refrain.

Bright, glorious Erythrina, how
Thy scarlet blossoms clothe the bough,
The " Red man " of the woods art thou.
With thy broad banner floating free
Proclaiming seed-time silently
To each dark Aborigine.
No written calendars have they,
Thy early flow'rs brook no delay,
The season due for toil all day.
When Kaffir maids with hoe in hand
Off to the fields a cheerful band—
They go to plant UMBONA land,
Singing a quaint wild roundelay ;
While o'er each " pick " the sunbeams play,
Working in tune the livelong day.

Bright, glorious Erythrina tree,
As time flies imperceptibly
The Spring's precursor thou shalt be.
High o'er the forest, dark and green
Thy crown of beauty will be seen,
While sweeping seasons intervene.
And many a field of golden corn
Spread over sloping hill and lawn
Shall ripen on each jocund morn.
And many a brilliant sunbird's song
Shall echo the lone woods among.
While red-winged lories sweep along,
And from the shadowy depths below
Their deep-toned notes in cadence flow,
As sounding through the woods they go.
Far from the busy world away

Where singing toils the bee all day
'Mid the wild flowers where sunbeams play.

Bright, glorious Erythrina tree,
Remote from cities—near the sea
My winged thoughts have flown to thee.
Queen of the woods, I love thee well,
Oh ! for a home with thee to dwell
For ever in the forest dell.
From life's stern battle would I hide
By some bright sparkling fountain side,
Regardless of all time or tide.
Forgotten be the world's wild roar,
The turmoil of her careworn shore.
Oblivion shield me evermore,
My canopy the sheltering trees,
My dream the song of birds and bees,
Good-bye to all things saving these.

M. E. Barber.

A Flower of the Karroo.

CHILD of the wilderness, bright starry flower,
In quiet blooming 'mid the shrubs and grass
Remote from sheltering wood and leafy bower
On the wide flats where bounding springbucks pass.
Haunt of the game, the vast and trackless plain
Where summer whirlwinds wing their circling flight
For ever wheeling round and round again,
For ever wheeling on and out of sight.
Oh ! land of sunshine, open wide Karroo
Where the swift ostrich scoops her lonely nest
The wandering bushman, bow and quiver too,
In search of game and locusts finds a rest.
Remote from peopled cities, bright-eyed flower,
Still gazing upward on the deep blue sky,
Rejoicing in each grateful passing shower
Or gentle dewdrops gath'ring silently.
In the lone hours of night when darkness reigns,
When storm and lightning cleave the midnight air,
Alone upon the dark and solemn plains,
Thy native country, thou art blooming there.
Home of the desert bird, oh ! vast Karroo,
Where broad-winged vultures circle far and wide,
The Korhaan's nest, just where the aloes grew,
'Tis there her speckled brood in safety hide.
The mirage stealing o'er the distant scene
For ever changing with the passing day
In mocking waters of alluring sheen,
Till o'er the plains the sunbeams fade away,
Oh ! false mirage, like the uncertain world,

Thy lakes and rivers are but empty air,
Tall shadowy trees, and mountain masses hurled
In dire confusion—forms which are not there.

Brave starry blossom of the wilderness

Little thou heedest when the storm-winds blow,
The serpent's wrath, the adder's vengeful hiss

To thee are nothing—they may come and go.
Alike regardless of the lion's roar,

Or the stern hunter, what is he to thee ?
Let time pass on as in the days of yore,

But thou shalt blossom there contentedly.

Oh ! fair, bright-eyed Mesembryanthemum,

Fain would I quit the busy haunts of men
To dwell with thee in peacefulness,—I come.

Good-bye, oh ! fickle world, again, again,
Good-bye to crowded cities, greed and strife,

To hollow-hearted joys and empty pleasures ;
Good-bye for ever to the storms of life ;

Welcome, ye plains replete with nature's treasures.

The sweeping tempest and the whisp'ring grass

Will bear away each ling'ring shade of sorrow
Beyond life's striving battlefield—alas !

Where oft-recurring troubles greet the morrow—
Far o'er the wastes, the checkered, broad Karroo,

Where the refracted sunbeams glance and quiver,
Calmly to dwell in quietude with you,

Bidding the callous world farewell for ever.

M. E. Barber.

The Cry of the Ox.

O CHRISTIANS, you have spoken
And called upon your God
To help the afflicted in their woe,
The slave beneath the rod,
To save the world from famine dire,
From sudden death and strife,
To shield the mariner from harm,
Protect the traveller's life.
You have prated of humanity,
And of your country's laws,
But 'gainst the wrong which we endure
There's not a single clause.
Our faithful services we give,
For you we toil and die,
But you have turned a deafened ear,
Against our bitter cry ;
From the low earth with pleading eyes
We have appealed to you,
'Gainst heavy burdens, and against
Our cruel treatment too.
There's no protection for our race,
Beneath the lash and load ;
With cruelties we cannot bear,
We perish on the road.

Beneath the glaring summer sun,
Through many a bog and river,
Each long day's journey dragging on,
Apparently for ever ;

Through drought and blinding dust we toil,
On the rough, rocky road,
Starving and worn and parched with thirst,
Bearing the ponderous load ;
Climbing the rugged mountain pass,
Against the sun's fierce rays,
Or the steep " drift " where, sticking fast
We may remain for days.
Struggling beneath the whip and lash,
The " sjambok's " galling pain,
Goaded and lashed, but striving on—
Striving, but all in vain,
Till hopelessly by the steep " drift,"
For want of food and rest,
Exhausted there we sink to earth,
Suff'ring and sore oppressed.

When wintry winds are howling high,
And chilling blows the blast,
When herb and pasture die away,
And summer days are past ;
Unflinchingly we hold our course,
Braving the biting storm
And rain, upon the bleak highway,
No sun to cheer or warm ;
Toiling, for ever toiling on
Beneath the galling chain,
'Neath desolation's mocking cry,
Plodding the watery plain ;
Till night descends in darkness with
The white snow falling fast,
And many a worn-out comrade sinks
To rest—to breathe his last ;

To rest from life's great conflict, and
To sleep—to rise no more,
Leaving the rugged paths behind,
Leaving earth's troubled shore.

We murmur not against the just
Who sympathise with all,
Providing food and shelter too
By many a rock-built "kraal";
Who do not overload their wains
For greed and love of wealth,
Our true protectors and our friends
In sickness and in health.
Our willing heads beneath the "yoke,"
Our harness girded on,
Across the endless "flats" we "trek"
To many a distant town.
Not theirs the fault that landmarks
Are by our white bones made,
Or that the bog or "rand" marks
Where nature's debt was paid;
Where, lean and starved and worked to death,
Nature received our fainting breath.

M. E. Barber.

To Marguerite.¹

IN the faint flush of dawning, Marguerite,
When the pale flowers wait tearfully the sun,
In that dim waking time when, fond and fleet,
Our tender reveries pass one by one,
Have your fair fancies a stray thought of me,
A transient bubble in the tide of those
Dream rivulets, that ripple to the sea
Where every fond illusion hath its close ?
And in the twilight, when the daisies fold
All their soft petals to retain the gleam
And warmth of sunshine in their fearful hold
While they shall rest, sweet Marguerite, and dream,
Ah ! then, do you, relenting, sigh to keep
The glow of exiled love in golden sleep ?

Theodore van Beek.

¹ *Poems and a Drama.*—THEODORE VAN BEEK. Esson and Perkins, Johannesburg.

Sonnet.

FAREWELL, my lady, and, bright star, good-bye !
My soul would find its immortality,
My love, uncrownéd, on death's wings would fly
To seek its laurel in Eternity.
Hope softly falls from gardens of the sky,
Whose soil is darkness, and whose blossoms light,
Falls softly in the murmured melody,
Borne earthward by the dewy winds of night.
O winds, that in the kingdom of yon mist
Sing to the flowers and all their secrets bear,
Inform my heart, now while the world is kissed
To listless silence, dwells contentment there ?
Do loving dreams inhabit That Domain,
Where I would end this flight to dream again ?

Theodore van Beek.

Resignation.

THE night has triumphed gently, and the moon
Has captured all the radiance of the stars,
Gaining in splendour by her avarice.
I am too minded of the rivalry
Of worldly things by heavenly instances
To rear aloft the fancies of my mind,
Or let my thoughts dissolve themselves in words.

The night-wind charms no more, and the tall trees
Whisper no phantasies again to me,
For all my soul is buried in my love.
All memories have dwindled like the stars,
And like the stars all other circumstance
Has waned. O love, how great thy rivalry,
Whose light entombs the radiant worlds of thought !

Theodore van Beek.

The Dream Lady

SHE comes with the dewdrops clinging
All radiant to her hair,
And the echoes of her singing
Trembling everywhere.

With raiment wind-blown flowing,
And wonder-shining eyes,
And cheeks that have the glowing
Of dawn-illuminated skies.

Her arms outstretched, entreating,
Would fold me to her heart.
Our lips a moment meeting
In vain reluctance part.

Ah ! me, how wild the yearning,
The breathless throe how deep
Of rosy rapture burning
In sleep, in sleep !

Theodore van Beek.

From Drama, "The Two Kingdoms."

.

Queen.

My son, forsake me not.
Thou art my light, my world, my universe,
The soul of my existence and the link
That binds me to all naturalness in life.
Without thee hope is hopeless, love is dead,
And day is turned to night and night to death.
O my son, my son, a mother's love
Can recognise no bourne, it still grows on
Through all the vast expanse of gathering years
More vigorous and ample, like a tree
Expanding ever, and when it must end,
Then, like a tree, it falls with a great crash,
Straining the fibres of its generous roots
Even to death.

.

Marcus.

Soft glow of evening, gentle murmuring
Of wind-blown rose trees, and fantastic sighs
Of towering elm trees with the glittering
Of sun-kissed leaves ! Oh, what a sweetness lies
In this last twilight hour of eve ! Good night,
Dear friends, and 'mid the hush of whisperings
That are beyond the silence and the light
And the great darkness, 'mid the glimmerings
And echoes fragrant of eternity,

Fond mystic charms of night, that do increase
Its awful beauty with solemnity
Of their strange presence, let us sleep in peace ;
Since, fearful lest these mysteries enthrall
Our souls to madness, God sends sleep to all.

.

Carlo.

When in the darkness at the close of day
I think of thee God sets so far away,
And memories of hopes foredoomed to die,
Fragrant of sweet communion, dim mine eye,
Then scornful of all grace, remembering thine,
Whose radiant light flowed purified, divine,
From the clear fountains of thy soul and cast
A glow of tenderness upon my past,
I turn to God and ask in bitter tone,
Why all things thrive save cherished hopes alone

.

O Daphne, love is the architect of heaven,
Whose halls by angels are inhabited,
And not by men,
Then these so paltry dwellings which love builds
On this unstable earth of ours, who fails
To gain admission to *their* rough-hewn rooms,
How can *he* dare aspire to inherit
The grander halls of love's eternity ?
A saint may enter a domain of vice,
And yet no sinner into paradise.

.

Manlius contemplating the dead Phebe.

How fair she lies, tho' pale and cold in death,
Seeming so near ; a million miles away,
The silent tomb awaiting her below,
Above the gates of immortality
Unfolding to receive her. O sweet Phebe,
'Twas but a heart-throb since, they say, thou livedst ;
The flush of life still lingered in thy cheeks,
Thy brow was not so cold, and thy dear hands
Lay not so motionless, so pale and mute,
Upon the lamp-illuminated coverlet.
Oh, what a dreadful preparation 'tis
To make the journey to eternity !
When we must feel ourselves grow cold and still,
And know the soul must part for evermore
With all the heart held dear on earth, must go,
And never come again to the dear spot
It doth forsake, nor breathe a soothing word
To those assembled, who have watched it take
Its faltering departure on a flight
That ends—oh, where ?—unable to delay
Its journey, or to call it back again.
Aye, that's the awful bitterness of death,
“ To call it back again.” Back !—little Phebe !
If that my voice could reach thee where thou art,
Beyond the moonlight and beyond the gloom !
If that this little hand could stir again,
And clasp mine own in mute forgiveness,
Thy memory would not live for evermore
A sad reproach imprisoned in my soul.

Thy, with these great lights flaring by thy bed
I thought I saw a flush upon thy face,
And the red life returning to thy lips.
See, I will bend quite low and close to thee,
And find if thou canst whisper in mine ear.
O—Nay, alas, 'tis vain ! Then I will quench
These two great fires seeking to deceive me,
And all alone, yea, all alone with thee,
Without the presence of Life's greatest friend
And its consoler, Light, quite with the Dark,
Near relation to the herald Death,
With thee and Darkness I'll grow nearer thee,
O near, perchance, that thou canst lean to me
For one short moment, and explain why God,
Who planned thee so to bloom and die, has laid
The burden of ungodly crime on me.

Theodore van Beek.

The Spoilers.

THEN she—"Ye love me, like a man, right well !
Ye cannot choose but love. How shall a man
Not love his own sweet flesh ? A certainty—
No less—I bide on. Yea ! or love, or hate,
I make my rest with thee. The field is ripe,
The forest deep, and love and day are fair :
Here is warm shelter—lissom I, and young :
And lusty thou, and comely—bide we here
In this green nest ! Life is so short, my Sweet !
And yield our days to joyance ! " Low she spake :
While all the time a murmurous drone of bees
Buzzed in my ears, and mingled with her words :
Blue and green burnished flies flashed to and fro
With humming flight, or sate like jewels flung
Against the setting of a sunward wall :
Thus as I sate, bewitched of sight and sound,
With languorous eyes, set on me saucy sweet,
She brake me to her will, and—we abode.

Hard by the lodge there lay a shining mere
Of deep black shimmering water, where great fish
And many slipped with grey and staring eyes
Of ghostly sort, and scales of spectral sheen,
And silvern gleamings. Summer—day by day
Hither I came, and whipped the driving wave,
And caught, and brought them ; and would after ride
To where the great white city stood a'plain,
And buy us bread : and in those days I grew
A mighty hunter of the forest deer,

And trapper of the lesser feathered game,
And things of fur, and these I also brought
To feed us in our joyance, till the days
Slipped on to later autumn.

But meanwhile
By day the woods grew wilder. Night by night
The sobbing, soughing branches lashed and swayed,
As they would smite all nature to the ground.
The garland from the shrilling woodland shed
Gathered in heaps, and rustling rose, and fell
Flapping about the wall, and voices cried,
And in the wood were wailings, and the shriek
Of startled shapes, that blindly smote the dark
With sudden snappings, careless of all path
So they but fled ; and on the ways by day
Were all strange footprints, where no foot had trode ;
And uncouth shapes, that vanished from the sight
As soon as seen, stood out from bush to bush,
Or peered between the tree-stems rampantly ;
Till life became a horror for the shapes—
But nothing saw she, or nought cared for it.

There came a day the loud winds failed, and fell ;
And all was quiet, for a clinging mist
That writhed, had crept till all the woods were hid
In its pale wreathings ; and my heart was blithe,
Because the woods had rest : and forth I went
To drench my hot flesh in the dripping mist,
And drink its coolness. Forth I went, and strayed,
And wandered, watching how the white folds drew
About the glistening trees, whose boughs began

To shed their beadings. There, to me that watched,
Borne on the silvern bendings of the mist,
Yea, close beside me spake a whispering voice,
“ What doest thou here ? ” At once I turned, to find
Whence was the whispering voice, and if for me,
Or for another. So, from forth the mist,
Thrice came that question, “ Wherefore art thou
here ? ”

But though I looked, nought living might I see ;
And, save me, none regarded.

While I watched,
And listened, like the gleam within a cloud
When summer threatens, and the hanging steeps
Quicken with white internal restless fires
Of angry bickering, till their bolt be sped
To break in thunder ; so the rolling mist
Glowed on a sudden inly luminous :
Wherethrough like gloomy spectres stood the trees,
Stretching their black unshapely arms to strike
All lower life to utter nothingness,
But for a thought that stayed them.

George Kett.

“The Divine Tragedy.”

ACT III.

Night.

BARABBAS *in prison ; warder brings light, and admits*
JUDITH *to his cell.*

BARABBAS. Pent like a rat in this vile dungeon-air !
Let me have air : I stifle. Air ! Outside :
Open ! I scarce can breathe. Vain : vain I pray :
The doom of failure's on me. They'll not hear :
Or—hearing—will not answer. Give me grace,
Patient to wear these links of clanking steel :
It shall not be for long. What would I give
To see the sun—the blessed sun—again,
But for one little moment ! To feel, without,
The free wind beat against my throbbing breast
And cool this aching forehead ! Better far—
Far—I had died beneath the Roman steel,
Blue sky above my head, and billowing dust
Under my feet, what time we clenched with them
Than live, to stifle here. O free, fresh earth !
That I might once more feel thy good greensward
Spring 'neath my tread—thine atoms crunch, and
grate.

Oh for the upland slopes, the tumbling rills,
The gaunt grey peaks, of the Judean heights—
Where prowls the lean wolf, and the leopard hides,
Where wheels the towering vulture, and all night
The jackal's eerie wailing holds the air,
And echoing rolls through cavernous confines dim,

And deeps of yawning darkness. I'll not live !
What is there left to live for ? Hope is gone,
Freedom is lost : they hold me but a beast,
Left here to batten only, till the day
When strikes the hour of sacrifice. It comes—
And soon—e'en if it longest bide. I'll die
Before it comes. I'll disappoint them yet—
The Roman guard, that wait to drag me forth,
That hope to gloat upon my miseries,
That long to strut their utmost inch of strength
Striding beside me, saying by their port :
“ Behold in us the unvanquished conquerors,
Dragging again the victim to his doom ;
As 'tis our wont to ”—and the surging crowd—
The wolfish crowd, that's craven till it meet,
And meek as coward counsels ; but, when met,
Fierce-eyed, and devil-throated—and the sleek,
Silk-cinctured, full-paunched, oily Sanhedrim—
They shall not have their ghoulish will of me !
I will not live. I'll even now beat out
My breath against yon iron-studded door—
Or send it bursting—if these will but break,
And let me.

*(He struggles desperately with his chains, fails
to break them, and falls panting.)*

George Kett.

Of my Love.¹

SWEET is my Love as new-mown hay,
And fair as a lovely peach,
And in her eyes 'tis always May,
With a cloudless sky in each.

No fruit hath bloom like to her lips,
No sea like her ears a shell ;
Oh ! soft is the touch of her finger-tips,
And her voice is a silver bell.

Such a sunny radiance is her hair
That crowns her beautiful head—
To nothing on earth can I compare
The light upon it shed.

But her heart is the sweetest part of all—
'Tis a gracious greenery,
Refresh'd by unseen dews that fall
From a heaven-born purity.

Dear God, who hath made her so to be,
May nothing my heart deter
From a steadfast, lifelong loyalty
(All else be Thou) to her !

Hugh J. Evans.

¹ *The Golden Barque.*—HUGH J. EVANS. Esson & Perkins, Johannesburg.

Song of the Sea Birds.

We ride on the waves of the ocean,
We canter the furrow'd sea,
We beat with the throbbing emotion
Of the briny air and free.

We tread in the spray of the billows,
We meander the crests of the waves,
Like bending and rising of willows,
Whose branches the river laves.

We toss off the drops of the rain cloud,
We merrily sport with the gale,
Of their fury storms are in vain proud,
We laugh at their roar and wail !

We merely mock and grow deafer
To the howl of the raging foam ;
In whirlwind we dance as in zephyr—
The sea, the sea is our home !

Hugh J. Evans.

To my Canary.

Killed in his Cage.

THE bright little casket is rifled
Of music and magic and lore !
The voice that thrill'd ecstatic
Will sing to me songs no more.

From the Happy Islands thou camest,
Bringing their happiness here,
Making this waterless landscape
A sparkling valley appear.

Thou wast ever a joyous comrade,
Singing from morning till night,
Till I almost forgot my exile :
Thine own thou forgottest quite.

But a butcher-bird enticed thee
With treacherous beak and strong ;
A double executioner,
He broke thy neck and thy song.

And now to thee I am trying
A broken song to sing :
It cannot, alas ! awaken
The heart 'neath the golden wing.

Farewell to thee, expert minstrel !
A Kingdom has gone with thee :
The cabin thou madest a palace
A cabin again will be.

Hugh J. Evans.

Witwatersrand.

WHEN first he saw thee lying there,
A foundling on the barren veldt,
He heeded not thy bosom bare,
Nor lovingly beside thee knelt.

He gazed without or joy or fear
Into the trackless northern gleam ;
Though muddy waters turn'd to clear,
He did not of thy magic dream.

He pass'd, he left thee in thy sleep,
To press where greener pastures lie ;
To him his oxen and his sheep
Were riches which no gold could buy.

Another came, with other cares,
Half guess'd some comeliness unknown,
And almost woke thee unawares,
Then left thee lying all alone.

A lovely grace in thy repose
To him some fleeting beauty brought,
And afterward in vision rose
To haunt and tantalise his thought.

He came again with wild surmise :
Thy sleep to waking slumber pass'd ;
He chafed thy limbs, he kiss'd thine eyes,
He woke thy glowing heart at last.

A multitude from every shore
The marvel of thy waking drew ;
And he who pass'd thee by before,
The other too, were lost to view.

And now they crush thy throbbing heart,
They beat the life-blood from thy veins,
They spend thy wealth in every mart,
They feel thy pulse to count their gains.

Hast thou, perchance, the magic still
To clarify the muddy streams ?
Or can thy rifled treasures fill
The hope and beauty of our dreams ?

Hugh J. Evans.

NOTE.—Witwatersrand means White Water's Ridge. When the Boers trekked northward they found that, after crossing the muddy streams of the Orange River Colony, at last they came to clear water—hence the name. The streams on the south of Witwatersrand are muddy, on the north clear.

Song : The Soldier's Home.¹

I.

THERE'S a dear little cottage that stands in the dale,
Where early the dog-roses blow ;
And the woodbine and clematis over it trail,
And around it the sweet lilacs grow.

II.

And there in the porchway dear granny still sits,
And mother is stirring within,
And Mary is singing a song as she knits,
And Nelly is learning to spin.

III.

And there, through the garden and under the trees,
Two urchins are running about,
Hunting the butterflies, chasing the bees,
With many a laugh and a shout.

IV.

And there, by the lattice which wide open stands,
By seed and fresh water made glad,
The bullfinch, in spite of captivity's bands,
Is piping away as though mad.

¹ *Child Roland and other Poems.*—A. HAYNES BELL.

V.

O yes, I can see them, that cottage and all,
In fancy's sweet vision quite plain ;
But oh ! shall it ever my fortune befall
To enter that cottage again ?

VI.

God knows ; so contented, whatever betide,
I'll shoulder my Metford, and march,
With mother's fond blessing on every side,
And over me heaven's blue arch.

A. Haynes Bell.

The Knight who came from Avelon.

I.

HE rode his charger down the dell,
The Knight who came from Avelon.
A coal-black steed became him well,
Who sure as death and fierce as hell
Fought in the lists at Avelon.
His name or age might no man tell ;
No page could say where he might dwell.
A many knights together fell
Dead in the lists of Avelon.

II.

There were three brothers of one race
Fought in the lists of Avelon.
He smote them all upon the face ;
He broke their visors with his mace,
The Knight who came from Avelon.
He spoke no word of kindly grace ;
He smote them in a little space ;
And then he turned and left the place,
And rode away from Avelon.

III.

He turned adown a beechen wood,
The Knight who came from Avelon.
His mace and lance still red with blood
He cleansed in the brook that flowed
Fast through the meads of Avelon.
The night fell on him where he stood ;
He eased his charger of its load ;
And thrice he looked along the road
That goeth up to Avelon.

IV.

His eyes were blacker than his steed,
The Knight's who came from Avelon ;
His heart was blacker than his creed ;
His heart exulted in his deed,
The three he slew at Avelon.
Said he, " It was in vain to plead ;
They only mocked us in our need ;
Now all, save one, have got their meed
This day in smoking Avelon."

v.

He chose him there a grassy nook,
The Knight who came from Avelon.
His helmet's clasp he did unhook,
His helmet from his brow he took
Still looking up to Avelon ;
His raven hair adown he shook,
Then bathed his forehead in the brook ;
But on his knees still turned to look
The way men come from Avelon.

vi.

Against a rock he laid him down,
The Knight who came from Avelon ;
And watched the roadway to the town,
And watched the low dune till its crown
Failed in the mists of Avelon.
He heard the water lap the stone ;
He heard the night-wind sigh and moan ;
Then fell in sleep, while all unknown
The moon arose o'er Avelon.

vii.

Then came there one like gliding snake
The way men come from Avelon.
His hair was yellow as a flake
Of golden sand beneath the lake
That sleepeth south of Avelon.
Too young he was a lance to break ;
He grieved for his dead brothers' sake :
And he had sworn the life to take
Of him who came from Avelon.

VIII.

He saw him sleeping there alone,
The Knight who came from Avelon ;
For page or follower he had none :
The moon upon his armour shone,
High soaring over Avelon.
His dark hair in the wind was blown ;
He leaned his back against the stone ;
And in his sleep he gave a groan,
The Knight who came from Avelon.

IX.

He got him up into a place
Above the Knight from Avelon.
A stone he tilted from its base ;
It thundered down the rock apace ;
Up sprang the Knight from Avelon.
He looked around a moment's space ;
It smote him on his upturned face ;
It twisted, like a cord, his mace
That slew the three at Avelon.

X.

He moved nor foot nor hand nor head,
The Knight who came from Avelon.
Upon his back he lay outspread,
While from his mouth a stream ran red
As blood in lists at Avelon.
One came and looked upon him dead :
" It is her cursed knight," he said ;
" My sister he shall never wed,
The Knight who came from Avelon."

XI.

He led the coal-black steed away
That bore the Knight from Avelon.
He left the dead man where he lay,
And rode on till at break of day,
Across the mere of Avelon,
He saw afar the towers grey,
And heard the wild swan scream at play,
"Your lover's dead," men heard him say,
"Dead in the woods of Avelon."

XII.

She rose ere middle of the night,
The gentle Maid of Avelon.
She dropped unseen the castle's height ;
Then caught and rode her palfrey white
Fast to the woods of Avelon.
Above, the moon was shining bright ;
She tracked the hoof-prints by its light,
Until she found her own true Knight
Dead by the stream of Avelon.

XIII.

She lay awhile upon his breast,
The maid who came from Avelon.
"Of all the world he loved me best ;
God in His mercy grant him rest,
The bravest Knight of Avelon."
Said she, "They mocked at his request ;
They cursed him only while he blessed ;
Then madness on his spirit pressed,
And wrought the deed at Avelon."

XIV.

A place she chose beneath the tree
Where fell the Knight from Avelon.
She wrought his grave upon her knee,
And laughed the while with savage glee,
The witless Maid of Avelon.
She laid his body in. Said she,
“ I wonder if he seeth me ;
And who is better, I or he,
The Knight who came from Avelon ? ”

XV.

She ate the berries at his head,
The dying Maid of Avelon.
“ I will not tarry now,” she said,
“ My love, my own true Knight is dead ;
I weary now of Avelon.
I will not with another wed ;
I will not so be comforted ;
I will not stay since he has fled,
The Knight who came from Avelon.”

A. Haynes Bell.

To a Sea Conch.

I.

WHAT hast thou *seen* ? Upon thy sandy floor
Have sea-nymphs played ? Would I had then been
there
To see their white limbs and their faces fair
And weed-bound yellow hair !
Or didst thou lie upon some fatal shore
Fretted with rocks, whereon the cruel foam
Lay like a mist ? Or was thy sheltered home
Some cavern where the salt sea, morn and eve,
Crept in to woo ? And was the shingle still
Thy bed of love ? And did the seaweed wrap
Thy couch with its green curtains to receive
Thee to itself, where thou mightst take thy fill
Of blissful ease within old ocean's lap ?

II.

What hast thou *seen* ? The swordfish gleaming dark ?
The octopus its lithesome arms uncurl ?
The oyster sleeping on its bed of pearl ?
The sudden, fearful whirl
Made at its quarry by the hungry shark ?
Or didst thou dwell in some deep, silent vale
Where sunlight never came, or came more pale
Than struggling moonbeams on a misty night ?
There are perchance who could the mystery tell,
And thy harsh name repeat, and what has been
Of thy past life reveal : and then the light
Of fancy would depart from off thy shell ;
And it were vain to say, What hast thou seen ?

III.

But I am not of these ; and thou to me
Art more, I feel, than thou canst be to such,
Who are through toil and study overmuch
With fancy out of touch ;
And cannot be at one with mystery,
But must search out and know the secret cause,
And can—or think they can—reduce to laws
The scent of roses or the linnet's song,
As they have robbed the rainbow of its dyes.
These ever cry, " Things are not what they seem ;
And time is short, and art is very long."
Let these seek truth out with their Argus eyes ;
But—child of love and beauty—let *me* dream !

IV

Yes ! let me dream. The poet is a child
Who never, though he would, may lose his youth ;
The mere appearance is his aim, in sooth ;
And not the naked truth.
And though his speech at times be dark and wild,
Yet, as the children's, marvellously right
Are all his judgments ; and a second sight
Is his to know intuitively the wrong,
And shun it as he will. And if he spend
His strength for nought, O do not therefore deem
His vision vain, or impotent his song,
Or false the altar which his feet attend.
The child of love and beauty, let him dream !

V.

What hast thou *heard*? For unto thee, O thou
Mute mystery, my thoughts revert again;
O'er thee the thunder of the mighty main
For years did burst in vain.
'Twas now thy lullaby at birth, and now
Thy requiem when in time thou cam'st to die;
Then the waves tossed thee from them high and dry,
And left thee to the wild winds and the sun.
Who found thee there, and brought thee here, to fill
A poet with such musings, who shall tell?
But though thy long sea sojourn all be run,
To fancy's ear a murmur haunts thee still
Of the far ocean which thou lovedst so well.

VI.

What hast thou heard? The scream of seagull hoarse?
The bark of seal? The albatross at play?
The chant perhaps of sailors as they lay
Anchored in some still bay?
Or was thine ear for such too dull and coarse;
And was some low mute sound of love or hate
All thou couldst know; and this—save for the grate
Of thy shell walls upon the shingly beach—
Thy all of that vast wave of harmony
Which, from the song of nightingale unto
The chirp of cricket or the boding screech
Of night-owl, floods this great world like a sea,
Keeping it still mysterious and new?

VII.

Some low, mute sound ! And if so—what of that ?
Let others mock thee in their pride of birth,
Scorning—if so they must—thy lowly worth.
Poor creeping worms of earth !
They have delved deep and now are waxen fat.
And know no more the dust from whence they came.
But let this thought their pride of sufferance tame—
That *thou* hast answered thy Creator's end,
And wrought the work it was thy lot to do,
No matter now how lowly or unseen ;
While they—whose haughty looks scarce condescend
To own thy being to all things most true—
False and “ infirm of purpose ” still have been.

VIII.

What hast thou *heard* ? Ah me ! what have I heard ?
Whose were those accents from the upper air ?
What spirit voices to my low despair
Spoke soothingly and fair ?
Who called to me when passion inly stirred ?
And when lust rose within me, ah ! what tone—
Like a great bell that tolls its knell alone—
Struck terror to my soul ? And when my hand
And heart would close with more than miser's care,
Or knowing, I yet feared to speak the right :
Whose was the warning and the reprimand ?
Whose then the voice that bade me give and share,
And strive, though I must perish in the fight ?

IX.

What hast thou *felt* ? Though thou couldst nothing see,
And nothing hear, yet this was surely thine—
To feel the welcome touch of ocean's brine,
Or sea-weeds round thee twine :
Or—what to thy still life was all to thee—
Perceive thy fellows at thy side ; and know,
At least in some small measure, friend from foe.
And did love ever stir within thy shell,
Or hatred ever claim thee for its own,
Or selfishness invade thee night and day ?
Or are these things, which make our heaven or hell,
In that dim region of thy birth unknown—
Being heirlooms but of man's superior clay ?

X.

What hast thou *felt* ? Ah ! who shall this proclaim ?
Thy joys and sorrows, who shall give a voice ?
Was life a thing o'er which thou didst rejoice ?
And death a painless choice ?
Or was the king of terrors but the same
To thee as unto us poor mortal men ?
And didst thou flee before his face ; and when
He seized thee, writhe and struggle in his grasp,
And fight and cry for mercy might and main,
And only yield when strength and life were spent ?
If so, when I too lie at my last gasp,
And all resistance be for me in vain,
Shall I, poor conch, than thou be more content ?

XI.

But what *art* thou ? A shell, it seems, at most !
A house, a palace, with the tenant flown !
Thy corridors all empty and alone !
Sight, hearing, touch, all gone !
Yet hast thou something still of which to boast,
Fair as thou art to sight, and smooth to touch,
Who of us men shall ever boast as much—
We, who are doomed to die, and leave no trace,
But what is loathsome, to record our past,
And link us to our kind who follow on ?
A few last words which time shall soon efface !
A few poor deeds upon the future cast !
A few frail hopes, and more memorial—none !

XII.

And so with *me* ! But stay—have I not hope
Some word or line of dewy poesy
Shall yet survive me, which men may decree
My monument to be ?
Such is in truth at times the earnest scope
Of my desire—poor seer that I am—
Though well I know, for all the world's acclaim
No soul sleeps better in his narrow bed ;
And a good conscience, when man wakes from clay,
Shall more avail than fame's loud tongue, in sooth.
And if I too would speak, yet being dead,
'Tis not mere vanity which prompts my lay,
But 'tis the love of beauty—which is truth.

XIII.

Go, then, frail ode ; be thou my painted shell !
And should in future days one stand and say,
What did *he* hear, and see, and feel ? I pray
Speak then for me, my lay ;
And this unto the one who questions tell :
“ He heard a voice for ever speak within,
Woe ! Woe ! to him who liveth in his sin !
And saw that by man’s own unaided will,
Do what he might, none of his fellows rose
Above earth’s miry clay and sinful leaven ;
And feeling to his sorrow, this great ill
Strike to his spirit cold as winter snows—
He fled for help and comfort unto Heaven.”

A. Haynes Bell.

The Last Stand.

I.

COMRADES, wake ! ’tis morn !
See, the foe draws near !
Britons we were born,
Britons then appear.
Death we laugh to scorn ;
Shame alone we fear.

II.

They are many, true ;
We are but a score,
But, though we are few,
Honour makes us more ;
So we’ll count anew
When the fight is o’er.

III.

Now for all we love—
King and Empire, friends ;
Now for God above,
Who the right defends.
Strike, nor recreant prove
To our Country's ends.

IV.

Freedom, justice, peace,
These we bring to all.
'Tis our faith, too ; these
Are our Empire's wall :
Grow with its increase,
Perish with its fall.

V.

'Tis a sacred cause
Summons to the fray ;
Not for vain applause
Or for fame we pray.
For our Country's laws
Stand we here to-day.

VI.

Stern will be the strife ;
Let us do or die.
Honour's more than life,
More than victory,
More than children, wife ;
Let us do or die.

VII.

Each, then, do his part ;
Fight, lads, with a will.
Many a gallant heart
Will the tidings thrill ;
Many a tear will start
To our memory still.

VIII.

And should we prevail,
As by grace we may,
What a shout will hail
This triumphal day !
How the foe will quail !
What will England say ?

IX.

Steady, lads ! lie low !
See, the foe appears !
Let us treat him now
To three British cheers ;
Then the victor's brow,
Or a nation's tears.

A. Haynes Bell.

Visions of Love. xiv.¹

I HONOUR him who stands for truth,
And challenges the chartered lie ;
Who recks the right, and not the ruth,
And calmly dares to do or die..

I hail the trenchant force of mind,
Which cuts a fond tradition down,
To face the foe that lurks behind,
Tho' church and world may sneer and frown.

I own the trained and patient skill
Which breaks thro' Nature's bolts and bars ;
Or chains her subtle powers at will,
And weighs an atom or the stars.

Which shows a System free from flaw,
One force in matter's Protean range ;
And holds the clue of constant law
Thro' all the sinuous paths of change.

Give Science, too, her meed of song,
And bid her run her lightning race ;
For Truth, the Queen, can do no wrong,
Only her ministers are base,

Who take their grain of truth for All ;
Their minds as measure of the world ;
Who slime our limits as they crawl,
Then in their little shells lie curled :

¹ *Cutting Capers.*—H. M. Foot. T. Maskew Miller.

Who put hypothesis for proof,
And bind the spirit by the sense ;
And think one Science warp and woof
Of Nescience and Omniscience.

Experience only sifts the dust,
Love finds the jewels of the mine ;
Blind Logic treads the purple must,
But Intuition drinks the wine.

When Science has ' the whole ' defined,
I see outside the greatest part ;
The more I know the worth of mind
I love the pure and tender heart.

.

Love stays the soul when doubts are rife ;
Faith on the dark still sheds her light ;
When sorrow sounds the depths of life,
Hope metes its length, and breadth, and height.

Thro' human love I see divine,
And know the God you fail to prove ;
By whom dust breathes, and systems shine,
In whom we are, and live, and move.

H. M. Foot.

Visions of Love. XIX.

I FEEL a Presence everywhere,
Breathing in fragrant morning hours,
Winging the limpid summer air,
And nestling in the budding flow'rs.

It glimmers in the setting sun,
It sings throughout the starry night,
And while the mystic circles run,
Moves in the calm, mysterious light.

Within the forest's secret gloom,
Beneath the billow's ceaseless strife ;
Off where the thyme and heather bloom,
And light is musical with life ;

Where sleeps the daisy-dappled meads,
And rippling waters softly glide,
Where breezes rustle in the reeds,
Where clouds upon the whirlwind ride ;

Where through the valley sweetly flows
The pealing of the village chime,
Where on the mountain silent snows
Are shaken from the wings of Time ;

Beyond the surging of the sea,
Above the broad ethereal dome,
Afar in deep Immensity,—
Where'er my wayward thought may roam,

A Spirit greets me with its smiles,
And folds me in its sheltering breast,
And all my weariness beguiles,
Till Nature lives and life is blest ;

Till from the rock unwonted tears
Burst at the piercing touch of joy,
And o'er the strength of manhood's years
Re-blooms the freshness of the boy.

O mighty, tender pow'r of Love !
Thou bid'st the world grow beautiful ;
Thy deathless light yet shines above
The mortal shadows cold and dull ;

And all I see, and think, and feel,
Illumined and inspired by Thee,
Becomes the symbol of the Real,
And speaks the Present Deity.

H. M. Foot.

Truisms.

Who tries to be another, plays the fool,
Who dares to be himself, shall set the rule ;
Who nobly works shall gain his welcome rest,
Who in the bad sees good shall grasp the best ;
Who looks for duty shall find happiness,
Who blesses others, others too shall bless ;
He shall not want who knoweth how to give,
Nor fear to die who learneth how to live.

H. M. Foot.

Groping.¹

HERE stand I like a diver with clenched breath,
Ready to leap into the depths below,—
Dark depths, and cold, that seem a fore-sought death,
To grasp the dim pearls smiling as they grow,
 Like a wan fairy's spell,
Or will-o'-the-wisp that floateth thro' a well.

Oh ! calm the diver as he standeth there :
Yet will the thought come—" Shall in truth I rise
With my hands clutching salt, growth, or held bare,
Balked of an ocean's starry mysteries ;
 Worn out of wandering
Thro' dark sea-places where black seaweeds spring ?

" Or shall I rise so heavily, my faint lips,
Just opened to receive the breath they crave,
Will, sinking back, bubble with dread eclipse,
From a sea clasping up like to a grave :
 And, sinking, I will fall
Down to where grey pearls make my coronal ? "

Thus stand I, ere I open up my verse,
Because I know it is of chaos borne,
And I may empty-handed rise, or worse,
Tumble far back, and know myself forlorn.
 While round and o'er me go
The echoing winds that hollow spaces know.

Edith Vivian.

¹ *Pursuit of Poetry.* Esson & Perkins.

A Little Garden.

A LITTLE garden set beneath
The upper earth five steps or so ;
Around it largest trees do grow,
Feeding the soil with each leaf death.
Here is no room for wanton wind,
Here scarce the golden sun can find
His way through all the em'raldrie,
To kiss the soil and seeds set free.
The little fays in this retreat,
That 'stablish guard, and foes defeat,
Must walk with icy, small blue feet ;
And pause to rub their hands with glee
In each small sunflake they can see.
The gay nasturtiums dance and lurk
All massed adown green lattice-work.
The oldest hardly cease to glow
Before they toss their seeds below.
So that the ground is quite astare
With plants new-born, whose leaves all bear
Strange drops of dew that spin and roll
As on small worlds, from pole to pole ;
While, underneath, the ground doth stay
From the night's tears as wet all day.
The violets are the faintest blue
Not knowing the sun ; but this is true,—
Their odour is more delicate
Than those may bear, who captivate
The sun ; because whatever's made

Grows far more beautiful in shade.
The thin, pink rose-stems turn their thorns
To softest things, like fairy horns.
The winter-cherry here hath freed
Her grief, and let her berries bleed
All over her. The pale worms move
Through the damp soil, and fill each groove
With blacker yield. Each weedy herb
May grow without a hand to disturb
Its richness.—Here can breed no harm !
The peering sunbeams scarcely warm
This odorous damp air, or bring
A brighter spot to beetles' wing.
Even the seasons passing wink
Above this sheltered garden's brink.
For when the summer leave has ta'en,
Autumn, grown old, and spring long slain ;
When rigorous winter here doth range,—
There is no havoc, scarce a change.
Only the white dew thicker drips,
And every fay has chattering lips ;
Only the pale worm colder creeps ;
While every sun-spot fainter grows,
As if it drew its warmth from snows.

Edith Vivian.

Qui Bono ?

Two dewdrops trembling 'neath an emerald glade
Formed like a shadowy forest out of grass ;
Feel a sun-finger slipped between a blade,
And one beside it, till they rise and pass
In a white vap'rous drifting, sore afraid
That the same cloud will never make their bed.

Two leaves produced upon the dusky stem
Of some strong, gauntly-peopled branch—so green
The flowing air makes green mist over them—
Wake in the morning blood-tipped, and the keen
Fierce wind of Autumn straight from Winter's hem
Cuts thro' their stalks, and pitiless scatters them.

Two crimson seeds within one ovary,
Fed by the same life current, till the hand
Of Nature splits their home, and sets them free—
And whither ? one may rot thro' barren sand ;
The other reach some island o'er the sea,
And cover it with fertile progeny.

What others ? Birds, a pair that flit and fly
Far from the nest that falls within decay,
And nevermore may hold them happily,
Since the blue wind hath carried them away.
Nest lost, each other vanished in the sky,
Oh separation ! barren vacancy.

The last are lovers in a valley fair,
Where rippled upper waters hear the sweet
Wild kisses, and, enticèd more to hear,
Hurry to lay more kisses at their feet ;
But mark with grief those lovers are not there,
And down the lower course their sobs away do bear.

Two leaves, two birds, two dewdrops, lovers twain,
That in this narrow earth go wandering—
Oh ! narrow earth, surely you catch their pain,
Surely your leaves shall nod, your birds shall sing,
Dewdrops shall glisten, lovers kiss again,—
Or is your mating, narrow earth, in vain ?

Edith Vivian.

Just a Toy.¹

COMES again as once before,
To the rich and to the poor,
 Christmas-tide.

And the purses of the few,
(Millionaires or well-to-do),
 Open wide.

But around each little bed
There is silence. Overhead
 Mystic Pain
Hovers near with shuddering wings ;
And the joys that Christmas brings—
 Call in vain.

They who cannot run and play,
There lie still from day to day,
 Piteous sight.
Waiting for the dreaded sound,
When the doctor on his round
 Says, " Good night ! "

Oh ! the hours wrapped in gloom,
When, throughout the long, bare room,
 Children quake,
Tearfully await each throb,
Or, too weary, cease to sob,
 Lie awake.

¹ *Land of Wavering.* T. M. Miller.

While the dim lamp seems a glare ;
And the great walls threatening stare,
 White and chill.
Fevered bodies ache with heat ;
And a crinkle in the sheet
 Feels a hill.

While the nurse's calm, pale face,
Half in shadow—awes the place :
 And they think
Of their mothers far away—
Or in fretful accents may
 Ask for drink.

Then, ah then ! how great a joy,
Just to have a doll or toy !
 Who can tell,
Clasping tight some woolly friend,
They might for a time “ pretend ”
 To be well ?

Shall not those who, being strong,
Work or play the whole day long,
 Freely give ?
Each the happy thought possess,
“ Some poor child has found it less
 Hard to live ? ”

Sneyd.

The Bridge Between.

UPON the Bridge (like one who turns a page
And on the issue, waits, to laugh or cry),
Shading her eyes, she stands, 'twixt Youth and Age
And half-reluctant, heaves a long-drawn sigh :

“ Good-bye, sweet Youth, good-bye to heedless days,
When Life was Love and Love itself a thought.
A last farewell to Childhood's sunlit ways
Where idle Mirth and Innocence consort.

“ The touch of gentler hands, the anxious care,
The mother's kiss, the lingering embrace—
These are not lessened. Yet a void is there,
I fill no more mine old accustomed place.

“ I feel as true what once I failed to see,
I fail to see what once I deemed as true,
But nought is changed. The change is all in me.
I understand. Before—I vaguely knew.

“ The toys I loved lie on a shelf forlorn
And undisturbed amid the dust of years,
Whilst I, a toy of Fate, am left to mourn
The rosy dreams that soon dissolved in tears.

“ My childish woes, so great and yet so small,
Are long forgotten, or have grown absurd,
And, should some echo through the darkness call
With pleading note, I dare not breathe a word.

“ But work and play and wear a settled smile,
Nor let escape a trace of pent-up grief ;
Until the night—for then perchance awhile,
With solitude shall come a scant relief.

“ And now before me looms an unknown land,
The ghostly semblance of a distant shore.
Behind the Past. Around on either hand
The seething waters of the Present roar.

“ And surge and sweep. Yet I must onward tread,
And turn my steps towards that darksome wood
Where lies the Future, that I partly dread,
And partly long for—budding Womanhood.

“ But still my wandering fancies seek the cause
Of things to be and things that once have been.
And ere I venture, looking back, I pause
To gaze upon the Bridge that lies between.”

Sneyd.

The Thunderstorm.¹

DREAD emblem of the tempest-riven heart,—
War of the heavens—how terrible thou art !
Men boast when armies hostile armies meet,
And shout when fleet is fiercely dashed on fleet—
Heroic bosoms breast the surging wave,
And flames renerve the mighty arm to save ;
But when thy marsh'ling hosts in dark array
Press to the battle up the dusky way,
And sun and moon and stars retire or fade,
Awed by the must'ring of thy cannonade ;
When death-winged lightnings charge the scowling sky
And low'ring elements in wrath reply,
While liquid chasms, thunder-riven, roar,
And on the trembling earth their torrents pour ;
When fire and flood and darkness ravish heaven,
And splintered clouds on clouds are wildly driven,
And thunderbolts, in dreadful fury hurled,
O'ershoot the battlements and shake the world,
Till Terror reigns amid Confusion wild
O'er shattered elements in ruin piled—
Men stand aghast in speechless helplessness,
And think of God and their own littleness.
Dread emblem of the tempest-riven heart—
War of the heavens—how terrible thou art !

W. Blane.

¹ *The Silent Land.* Elliot Stock.

The Rand Refugee.

INSULTED, ignored by a misguided race
As brave as his own, but with leaders untrue ;
Denied a political voice in the place
Which great by his skill and his energy grew ;
He stayed till the gauntlet to Britain was thrown,
Till they vowed that her sons they would drive to the
 sea ;
Then he looked to his Queen and his country alone,
For true was the heart of the Rand Refugee.

His wife on his arm and his son by his side,
He cast a last look at the home he had made,
Then walked to the station in shame-goaded pride,
And climbed on a truck, with nor shelter nor shade.
He stood through the night while the women lay down,
By day their companion and champion was he ;
Not caring, although he was fevered and brown,
For kind was the heart of the Rand Refugee.

He believed in his country, its leaders, its men,
And boasted that victory soon would be theirs,
Nor feared, though outnumbered as three is to ten,
So at Capetown he dabbled in stocks and in shares,
Till the news of misfortunes, like thunderbolts, came—
The surprise at Talana, the march from Dundee—
Then he shouldered a rifle to wipe out the shame,
For brave was the heart of the Rand Refugee.

He ranked as a private in field and in tent,
Companioned with "Tommy"—his tutor and chum ;
With the rations and rules of a soldier content,
He answered the bugle and marched to the drum,
Till with Roberts he entered old Jo'burg again—
Old Jo'burg from Leydsdom and Krugerdome free !
Gaunt, ragged, and lousy—what mattered it then ?
For proud was the heart of the Rand Refugee.

Disbanded, he sought out the home that had been—
'Twas plundered and pillaged to ruin and wrack ;
Grass-grown were the paths round the desolate scene,
Not even a dog came to welcome him back !
He paused on the threshold, for strange was the sight,
And strange his returning in tattered khaki ;
Then he wandered around till far into the night,
And sad was the heart of the Rand Refugee.

The life of a soldier had charms for him still ;
So he took up a rifle and kit-bag once more,
Turned out to the "hooter," took part in the drill,
And laughed by the camp-fire, at times, as before,
Till they brought him the news of his son and his wife—
He lay on the veldt, and she slept by the sea !
Then homeless and loveless, he cared not for life—
Now still is the heart of the Rand Refugee.

W. Blane

A Song of Pioneers.

FROM lands that are far off, and lands more near,
 We pioneers first came,
Yet brothers we from vanguard unto rear
 Through oneness of our aim.

For we believed with him who sent us forth
 Great thoughts should bear great deeds.
He said : " Two thousand miles shall ye go North—
 Dream unto dream succeeds."

Northward we went, our eager faces turned,
 Watching, and marching long,
And we fulfilled the thing for which he yearned,
 At last we sang this song :

" Toil do we give to thee, long labour due,
 Oh, flame of our life's fire !
Sweat of our brows art thou, our child-land true,
 And dole of our desire !

" Yet not to us who sowed shall be the reaping,
 Crops watered with our blood,
To other men the scything and the keeping,
 Tasting and finding good.

" Men of the mart and law, of stock and share,
 Penmen unused to strife, '
And men of pelf who speak the public fair ;
 Gold gets more gold to wife.

" They sneer because so little is our winning,
 So unacclaimed our fate,
Yet have they lost, who saw not the beginning,
 Some things we counted great.

" Never have these men known the joy of battle,
 Revally on the veldt,
Hum of an impi, roar of flying cattle,
 Clasp of a cartridge belt.

" Nor watched the dawn on some strong virgin mountain
 Break over a new world
Where sunlight from its deep perennial fountain,
 Peak unto peak is hurled.

" Seeing wide visions of a future glory
 Long as our race shall last,
And live anew its old and splendid story.
 —To us belongs the past."

Mrs. D. A. Bowen.

On the High Veldt.¹

HERMANUS, by what instinct deep, divine,
Hast thou upon these barren, wind-swept plains
Built up thy cot of white, green-shuttered walls
And thatched roof with pallid lichen stains ?

About thy doors a little, verdant field
Of grain may nod and be by breezes blown
To burnished steel ; beneath that screen of leaves
May glowing, aromatic fruits be grown.

Beyond the confines of thy meagre tilth
Roll out the measured billows of the veldt
In mighty harmonies, inviolate,
Of russet, amber, gold, and grey, that melt

Impalpably in Heaven's limpid surge,
And to the consecrated eye present,
From year to year, spring dews or autumn drought,
Such tireless variations, subtly blent,

As wake beneath the generating rain
To riotous delights of rainbow hue,
And flood these palpitating waves in veitch,
In yellow cassia, in tulip blue ;

In amaryllis, heath, and camomile,
The jocund offspring of an ageing earth,
That wanton with the breezes gleefully
And light the sober days with harmless mirth.

¹ *S. A. Magazine.*

Hermanus, lead me to that kopje grey
That shields a lakelet gleaming like a star,
Where grows, by that sole shadow cherished,
A Kaffirboom, whose blossoms cinnabar

Bestrew the marge, each petal but a sign
Of resurrection,—eager there to lave.
Beneath that flaming coverlet I find
A row of stones, and each one marks a grave.

I came for life and stumble upon death,
On death by life bedewed perennially,
Concealed by flow'rs that yearly bloom afresh.
Hermanus, what hath taught such truth to thee ?

Through uneventful days, and months, and years,
Shut in by everlasting veldt, thou lead'st
A hermit's life ; by day thy browsing kine
Are thy companions, and by night thou heed'st

The tireless murmur of mysterious winds,
The weird complaints of savage things that come
Soft-footed in the dusk about thy cot,
And thine uplifted soul, like these, is dumb,

Becharmed by fingers magical that weave
Of vap'rous elements, a fairy scene
And unsubstantial ; are those distant piles,
Hermanus, from this silent kopje seen,

This solitary kop of giant stones
That in a sea of mystic breathings floats,
God's azure hills whence I, intent, may glean
The psalms that here are mute in feathered throats ?

What needs unsatisfied hast thou, my friend,
To whom the domed heavens are unrolled
From utmost Eastern bound to utmost West,
In all their glorious pageantry unscrolled,

With nought to break their limitless expanse,
Or dim their Tyrian purple, richly starred ?
Nor lies such region far from those pure heights,
On which the sun, God's eye, looks undebarr'd.

Those vistas He at early morning hangs
With tapestries all weft from virgin snows,
Of tincture opalescent, tremulous,
On which young Hesper for a moment glows,

Till, through the curtains, flares His opened eye
And all the land in fire supernal steeps,
Whereo'er the lucent breath of morning flows
As once the Spirit o'er the formless deeps.

Each eventide He builds unceasingly
That holy city ; wall and bastion
Far west divinely flame with amethyst,
With jasper, beryl, topaz, chalcedon,

With jacinth, sapphire, emerald, and set
Among their glories, those twelve portals bright,
Of twelve unsullied and defileless pearls,
Whose gates shall not be shut at all by night,

While from our feet the plateaux roll, a sea
Of glass fire-mingled, bridged with mighty span
Of piers gold crystalline, Creator-trod,
A holy highway for wayfaring man !

Not strange to me, Hermanus, that a land
Whereover such celestial marvels shine
Should grapple thee with bonds infrangible !
I hold it in as great a love as thine.

J. Pritchard.

Night in the South.¹

CLEAR is the moon, and crystal clear the sky ;
The silver silence of this Southern night
Is hardly broken by the gentle flight
Of sighing winds and such soft minstrelsy
As Nature's music makes. If but the voice
Of England's nightingale could now awake
Old Night, and from yon deeply-tangled brake
Pour the full-throated measure of his joys,
Woes and sweet sorrows ! Could the incense rare
Of some new-garnered hayfield haunt this place,
Then this were England's June—fresh, fragrant, fair ;
And Memory should laugh at Time and Space.

W. F.

¹ *S. A. Magazine.*

Oh ! the Days Gone By.¹

Oh ! the days gone by, when we had no gold !
And our hearts were true and had not grown cold ;
When we drove together, long summer days—
O'er sandy roads and through forest ways ;
When all we possessed in our wain was stowed,
And our banking account was the worth of our load ;
And that same account till the golden dawn,
Like our waggon, was never " overdrawn."

Oh ! the days gone by, when no " rush " was known
Save the rush by the vlel and the river grown,
When, instead of hunting for reefs of quartz,
A vein of humour would gladden our hearts,
And we knew no club, and we had no scrip,
And our joy was the crack of the waggon whip,
And under the trees at our night's out-span
We " piped " to our African god, Fry-Pan.

Oh ! the days gone by, when our love was warm,
When we met at the " Fountains " in picnic form,
When we all brought turkeys and fowls and ham,
And liquor and tarts and imported jam,
And we danced and sang till the echoes cried
From the cave's dark depths, on the steep hill's side,
And with many a laugh and clang of hoof
We all drove home through the star-lit kloof.

¹ *A Wanderer's Rhymes*, by A. BRODRICK.

Ah ! what is now left to mark the spot ?
I seek it again, and I know it not.
Even the birds that were wont to sing
Have fled from the now imprisoned spring.
And the locomotive's shriek sounds shrill
Through the Poort, and round Erasmus' Hill,
And at my feet ! Oh, time ! Oh, sin !—
Lo ! an empty flask, and a sardine tin.

Oh ! the days gone by, I have heard it said
That the millionaires who have sold and fled,
Who wander around the globe's wide span,
And e'en seek some polish in Japan,
Drop their guilt at times, and sit and sigh
For the " veldschoens," and the days gone by,
For the old free life, short of cash and all—
And the scent of the dear old cattle kraal !

Albert Brodrick.

Epitaph on a Diamond Digger.

HERE lies a "digger," all his "chips" departed—
A "splint" of nature, "bright," and ne'er down-
hearted;
He worked in many "claims," but now (though
"stumped")
He's got a "claim" above that can't be "jumped."
May he turn out a pure and spotless "wight,"
When the Great Judge shall sift the wrong from right,
And may his soul, released from this low Babel,
Be found a gem on God's great "sorting table."

Albert Brodrick.

Love.

I've looked upon the Euxine's azure plane,
Spelled by its beauty, when our ship was still;
And watched the sunbeams, with a golden thrill,
Break on the waters—and the anchor chain
E'en to the glittering floor, down, down beneath,
Long have I traced—and thought that love should be
Like unto *that*—firm 'mid the storm's rude breath.
And holding even to Eternity!

Albert Brodrick.

To a Primrose Blossoming in South Africa.¹

SWEET little yellow head,
'Mid the broad green leaves,
How came you here ?
The month is now September,
And you are April's darling :
April, English April,
Who walks soft-footed through the dreaming
 woods,
And wakens buds of timid green
On old, rough, weather-beaten boughs,
And branches gnarled :
Green buds, that break
Like smiles upon the worn and wrinkled face
Of some dear snow-haired woman,
Whose heart is still too tender to grow old.

Welcome, little yellow head !
You bring the whole Spring with you. I can hear
The very voices of the winds at play
In glade and dell,
That keep some laughing secret all day long,
And only tell it
When Night comes, hushing, soothing,
Like an old nurse calling her babes to rest,
Tired out with play.

¹ *The Lady Beautiful.* Elkin Mathews.

Ah ! it is good to see you, little flower,
A smile from England flashed across the seas
To gladden hearts in exile.
You should be called Truth's emblem, for your
 smile
Forbids all falsehood. Who
Could gaze upon a primrose, and then lie ?

Dear little sunny head,
'Mid the broad green leaves,
Growing in my Love's garden,
Take all my thanks, for you
Have made a little April in this place
All for my Love and me.
You shine,
Here in the dulness of this Afric Spring,
Like a sweet lyric in a page of prose.

F. E. Walrond.

Religious and Metaphysical Poems.

Follow the Light.

A DEWDROP in shade of slenderest blade ;
A foam-flake on verge of mountainous surge ;

Delusive lake where deserts bake,
Or passing shade by an eagle made ;

One golden ray on a wintry day ;
A cloud's brief bliss 'neath the sunset-kiss.

Life's toil and strain but this to gain !
When lasting treasure no thought can measure

He may surely find, who with steadfast mind
Keeps trimmed and bright the Inward Light.

That Light may lead where feet shall bleed,
And voices drear assail the ear,

When horrid sights shall throng the nights,
And days be rife with fears and strife.

The treasure by thee will be found, maybe,
Amid the rattle and smoke of battle.

Or far it may lie 'neath a flickering sky
'Mid wastes ablaze in the scorching rays.

Perchance it peers where Winter rears
In the Arctic zone his eternal throne ;

Or far, it may be, 'neath the purple sea
On a weltering steep of the sunless deep.

But how or where be not thy care :
That priceless treasure no thought can measure,

He shall surely find who with steadfast mind
Keeps trimmed and bright the Inward Light.

Through toil, through pain, in loss, in gain,
By day, by night, follow the Light.

A. Vine Hall.

Lord of Angels.

LORD of angels ! from the splendour
Where the hosts of light
Throng to do Thy will, Thou camest
To our sin and night.

Camest Servant of the servile ;
Saviour of the lost ;
Lord of angels !—Christ of Calvary !
Careless of the cost.

Boundless love ! sublime compassion !
Gazing at Thy cross
Some have scorned the world's ambitions,
Held its gain but loss.

Teach us all to know more nearly
What Thy grief and love,
What our bitter need which drew Thee
From the bliss above.

That our hearts with true devotion
May be Thine to-day,
And our lives henceforward fruitful,
In good works alway.

A. Vine Hall.

A Hymn.

WHEN morn awakes our hearts
To pour the matin prayer ;
When toil-worn day departs,
And gives a pause to care ;
When those our souls love best
Kneel with us, in Thy fear,
To ask Thy peace and rest—
O God, our Father, hear !

When worldly snares without,
And evil thoughts within,
Stir up some impious doubt,
Or lure us back to sin ;
When human strength proves frail,
And will but half sincere ;
When faith begins to fail—
O God, our Father, hear !

When in our cup of mirth
The drop of trembling falls,
And the frail props of earth
Are crumbling round our walls ;
When back we gaze with grief,
And forward glance with fear,
When faileth man's relief—
O God, our Father, hear !

When on the verge we stand
Of the eternal clime,
And Death with solemn hand
Draws back the veil of Time ;
When flesh and spirit quake
Before THEE to appear—
For the Redeemer's sake,
O God, our Father, hear !

Thomas Pringle.

A Hymn.

THE music of the worlds of light
We hear more clearly than of old :
The wonders of the cosmic night
Man's spirit travails to unfold.

The deeps that seemed beyond our ken,
Where triple darkness held her sway,
Show now the blush of dawn to men,
And slowly brighten into day.

From where the stars their courses hold
Harmonious intuitions flow,
And through the mists obscure and cold
Shines now the surely quickening glow :

A glow that deepens into fire,
A stream of light serene and strong,
Wherein our souls shall lose desire
For selfish aims that lead to wrong.

Through clearer skies the heights are seen :

The darkness yearns to meet the dawn,
And o'er the heavenly ramparts lean
Familiar faces long withdrawn.

We feel them near us in our pain,
Their joys increase because of ours,
And when our final sins are slain,
We too shall wield their ampler powers.

Herbert Price.

Rites.

ONE bows to shapen wood or stones,
Dumb signs of a superior will,
Some power, whose influence he owns,
For good,—he knows not,—or for ill.

One glad at wealth of garnered wheat,
Or stricken at the stricken ear,
Bows to the sun, the Lord of Heat,
In grateful love or pious fear.

And one whose ways are on the seas,
Who notes the tides, the light, the dark,
To the Moon-goddess bends his knees,
And to the stars that guide his bark.

One marks the birth of kind from kind,
Yet cannot reach the hidden cause ;
In reverent awe he clothes his mind,
And Love the Lifegiver adores.

One says, " With gold and ivory
We make our burnished houses glow ;
Shall he who gives them graceless be ?
It were a shame to have it so."

And one says, " God is everywhere,
In wood or wilderness or flood ;
The earth is His, His is the air ;
What shall you build Him half so good ? "

And one, filled full of gratitude,
Would of her treasures give the best ;
Who, spite her yearning motherhood,
Offers the infant at her breast.

One says, " Can God delight in pain,
Or grudge where He hath given birth ? "
He yields Him of the golden grain,
Or of the treasures of the earth.

And one, whose savage nature leaps
With wild delight at blood or pain,
In sight of God his victims heaps,
Or dies to pleasure Him, self-slain.

" All, all, amiss," another cries ;
God wills His creature's happiness ;
Is He not good and just and wise ?
He loveth not to curse, but bless.

" Yea, all amiss ; they do but take
A part of God and mar the whole ;
And of their mental blindness make
A devil to devour the soul."

And is it only these or those
Who thus turn sweetness into gall ?
Or doth not everyone who throws
On other's hopes a funeral pall,

Saying, " Thus only can a man
The purpose of his God fulfil " ?
Our life is but a little span,
One little hour for good or ill :

And till the half of it be spent
We fret and chafe at others' ways ;
Were it not best to live content,
And what we find of good to praise ?

So small are we, we cannot scan
The boundless measure of God's might ;
Do as we may, still man is man,
And infinite is infinite.

And what is is, and what will be so ;
However we may strain our sight,
We cannot make the darkness glow,
Or turn the sunshine into night.

God gives us both, and both are good ;
And who of man shall dare to say
This is of heaven, this of hell ?
Shall brass and gold be judged of clay ?

Yet One there was who trod this earth
To show us how it may be trod ;
He came among us ; took our birth,
Lived, toiled, and died, and went to God :

And He judged not. He only said,
"I show you of the better way,"
There are that judge both quick and dead ;
Moses, the prophets, these are they.

And who is Moses unto us
But what our conscience doth approve ?
And what indeed is beauteous,
And just, and wise, and good, but Love ?

Thrice happy they to whom is given
To seek that love and find Him there ;
To them already earth is heaven ;
To them is heaven everywhere.

.

Ah ! what if one should weakly fear
To shape the yearning of his breast,
Yet live one longing, earnest prayer ;
Shall such an one go all unblest ?

H. V. Ellis.

Thou hast His Care.

Look up, sad soul ! Forget not how
The Master toil'd
When on this earth. His sacred brow
Was often soil'd
With labour's sweat. Then, labour thou,
Tho' joy-despoiled.

Nor think to find thy rest on earth !
Here is no sound
Of peace—but discord from our birth,
Until we've found
The grave. Life's, at its utmost worth,
A weary round

Of toil and care ! Doth trial sore,
Or cruel scorn
O'erwhelm thee ? Remember Him who wore
A crown of thorn !
How patiently His cross He bore
On shoulders worn.

And aching 'neath the load which press'd
Most heavily !
Ah, soul ! by every little cross distress'd,
Ah ! think how He
Was mock'd, and scorn'd, and sore oppress'd
With grief—for thee !

Take up thy burden, cheerfully ;
 Thou hast His care !
 He will not let it heavier be
 Than thou canst bear ;
 So follow Him, and thro' eternity
 His glory share !

“ *Mu.* ”

Life.

TOILING always, reaping naught,
 Never finding what is sought,
 Life with all unrest is fraught,
 Pain with joy walks hand in hand,
 Casting shadows o'er the land,
 A mysterious, mocking band.
 Love draws but a fitful breath :
 Hate soon steals her rosy wreath.
 Life springs forth from ghastly Death.
 How to part the tangled thread
 Which before me now is spread,
 I cannot tell. In pious dread,
 At the footstool of my King
 I will leave all questioning,
 All my vain unravelling.

“ *Mu.* ”

The Prayer.

TALK not of prayers that fail ; the prayers unheard
Are not the askings Paul meant when he said :
“ Pray without ceasing.” Be thou well assured,
The true petition, not of barren word,
But plumed of deed, scales Heaven overhead,
Where souls and suns from God’s high throne are shed.
Pray without ceasing, let good deeds unfold
Like petals of a rose, until, complete,
The flower of asking, full and fair and sweet,
Is fit for God’s right hand to take and hold.
False prayers are barren breath, like vapour rolled
Between men and the stars ; they hide the feet
Of angels. But the true prayer, wise and meet,
From chiming sphere to sphere on high is told.

W. C. Scully.

Ave Maria.

NIGHT steals with silent wings
On tower and town,
The darkness creeps and clings
By dale and down,
The stars shine manifold
In Heaven above ;
The world is grey and cold—
Give me thy love,
Mater amabilis
Ora pro me !

My heart is dark within
With fear and shame ;
What respite may I win
From my self-blame ?
I dare not lift mine eyes
To thy pure face—
O Mother, kind and wise,
Give me thy grace,
Mater castissima
Ora pro me !

One silver lamp burns low
Before thy feet,
Dim shadows come and go,
Vague murmurs fleet—
I seek through nights and days,
Disconsolate,
Beyond these gloomy ways,
The golden gate,
O Rosa mystica
Ora pro me !

J. R. E.

Via Crucis, Via Lucis.

(From the German of Kosegarten.)

THROUGH gloom to light ! And though grey darkness
banish

Fair Nature from thy longing eyes,
All's well ! all's well ! The shadows soon shall vanish,
And bright and clear thy morn shall rise.

Through storm to calm ! And if life's lightning flashing,
With thunder's roar, o'erpower thy will,
Faint heart, be brave ! Above the billows' crashing
A voice divine cries " Peace, be still ! "

Through frost to spring ! Though winter's snowy fleeces
Hide every trace of Nature's store,
All's well ! all's well ! For when the hoar-frost ceases,
Earth fills her lap with flowers once more.

Through strife to peace ! And if fell foes surround thee,
And succour thou implore in vain,
Faint heart, be brave ! When vict'ry shall have crowned
thee,
Triumph begins its endless reign.

Through toil to rest ! And though the midday swelter,
And dull fatigue sap all thy strength,
Faint heart, endure ! For eventide brings shelter,
And with it kindly sleep at length.

Through cross to crown ! And though the world seem
stronger,

And daily weaker, fainter thou—

All's well ! all's well ! Endure a brief spell longer :

God's victory shall crown thy brow.

Through tears to joy ! If morning find thee weeping

And sorrow fill the livelong night,

Faint heart, endure ! Thy lot is in God's keeping,

And there e'en pain becomes delight.

Through death to life ! Though earth be with its sorrow

A mortal waste of sin and strife,

All's well ! all's well ! In Heaven's eternal morrow

Death shall be swallowed up in life.

F. C. Kolbe.

The Open Vision.

Oh, to be out in the open !
Where the peace of God distills
In the whispering of leafy woods
And the lilt of limpid rills,
And the great calm of creation broods
On the strength of the holy hills.

Oh, to be out in the open !
With the blue sky over me,
Up-vaulting from the weather-gleam
Of the vast, encircling sea,
With its ripples roll'd
In Heaven's cloth of gold,
Or its great waves riding free,—
Their white crests lasht
By the stormy blast,—
Yet owning man's mastery,
As his brave bark sweeps
Through the surging deeps
To the haven where he would be !

Oh, to be out in the open !
Afar from the bigoted crew,
To walk n Heaven's light
And press on to the right,
Whose virtue makes all things new,—
Sweeping lies, in God's name,
To the pit of their shame,
By homage to that which is true !

But oh, to be in from the open !
Where the limitless, unconfined
Immensities of time and space,
O'erwhelm the human mind ;
As Heaven's host we scan,
Lord, what is man ?—
The drudge of a day
In his house of clay—
A mite of earth's crust
Who returns to his dust !

Oh ! well to be in from the open
Of the vastitudes profound,—
The terrors of eternities
In which man's thoughts are drowned ;
With the Witness that tells
That the pure heart dwells
In the House of the Lord even here,
With the Word Divine that is near,
Giving power to descry
The fair mansions on high,
Where at home we shall be
With God's whole family,
To behold all His grace
In the Son of Man's face.

J. P. Ritchie.

Under the Red Mast-Light.

THE sun has set, the twilight glow has fled,
The stars begin to twinkle overhead,
The veil of darkness on the deep is spread,

Pacing the deck, into the night I pry,
The waves leap up and clap their hands on high,
I hear the night winds wail and sob and sigh.

What stills the heart amidst the waste, dark night
The Captain's eye will read the course aright,
The compass gleams before the Steersman's sight.

Across the deep the destined haven lies,
Bathed in the light of sunny southern skies,
And soon will gladden our expectant eyes.

Deep unto Deep proclaims God's sovereignty,
He makes the darkness that is covering me,
And fearlessly I sail with Him the sea
That brings me to the Port where I would be.

J. P. Ritchie.

Morning Hymn.

THE shadows of the night have fled
Beyond the Western weather-gleam,
The banners of the morning-red
From Eastward stream.

Refreshed and quickened from repose
The joy of life is born anew,
The vesture of Creation glows
With gems of dew.

The hill-tops into splendour blaze
O'er mists that wash their feet with tears,
The woodland's wakening song of praise
Salutes our ears.

The flowers lift up their faces fair
To greet the Glory of their grace,
Their fragrance floats into the air
From morn's caress.

Lord ! lift my soul into the life
Which is the inner light of men,
And arm me with it for the strife
Of faith, again !

Renew the spirit of my mind
That I may prove Thy perfect will,
And let me in Thy service find
My freedom still !

Make all the fulness of Thy wealth
Unsearchable, my treasury !
Let virtue of Thy saving health
Go forth from me !

" Are there not twelve hours in the day ? "
Then let me work while light doth last ;
Nor miss the ministries that aye
Are hastening past !

Twelve daylight hours ! then let me learn
That having in them done my best
Their limit should suffice to earn
Thy good night's rest !

J. P. Ritchie.

The Present Christ.

LORD, is it true that Thou art near
Thine own, as their abiding friend,
Thy living voice still in their ear,
Thy Presence their defence from fear
Unto the end ?

How shall I come even to Thy seat ?
O Master, where dost Thou abide ?
Where wilt Thou show Thy hands and feet,
And bid me reach my hand to meet
Thy piercèd side ?

I hear Thee answer, " I am found
In every messenger of mine,
Whose voice with no uncertain sound
Proclaims to men the eternal ground
Of truth divine.

" In all that gives the sense of right
Is my abiding Presence known,
And through the sovereignty of might
That conquers still in faith's good fight
My power is shown.

" In all who suffer here below
And seek from wrong redress in vain,
In every moan of mortal woe,
In hearts that ache and tears that flow,
My claim is plain.

“ In every gracious word and deed
Whereby sad hearts are helped and healed,
In hands out-held to human need
My glory he who runs may read
As thus revealed.

“ For whosoever in My name
Gives but a drink in charity—
Acknowledges the stranger’s claim—
Receives a little child, the same
Receiveth Me.”

J. P. Ritchie.

Symphony.

I PLAY my flute in the steeple,
High over the heads of the people,
And the sound of the notes
From the belfry out-floats
Into the sweet calm
Of the evening air,
As if voicing the psalm
Of the Lord’s host, whose end
Is His will to attend,
In the mission to bear
The blessing and balm
Of his answer to prayer
Down the radiant stair,
Whereby earth is given
Free communion with Heaven.

As on one note I dwell,
What means that weird swell,
From afar overhead,
Whose vibrations outspread,
Till the belfry they fill
With their resonant thrill,
As a voice of reply
Sounding down from on high,
In accord absolute
With the tone of the flute ?

All the magical spell
That has roused the great bell,
So far out of reach
To spontaneous speech,
Is the touch of the tone
Of its keynote alone ;
For the mystical tie
Of consonancy
Has evoked the salute
Of the bell to the flute,
Whereby we can tell
The true pitch of the bell.

Great God of all might !
Thou art clothed in the light
Whose effulgence denies
All access to our eyes,
Making darkness more dense
By its glory intense.

Yet, my God, I would find
The keynote of Thy mind,
I would know my own part
In the pulse of Thy heart.

To that Wisdom's high plane
How shall I attain ?
With what plummet line sound
Thy thought's speechless profound ?
What power can I bring
To find out what Thou art ?
How hear the true ring
Of the voice of Thy heart ?

Lord ! here is my stay
Against dread and dismay—
That the breath which is Thine
Thou hast made also mine—
That the spirit in me
Has its utterance from Thee,
And the voice of its cry
Means Thine answer on high—
Yea, Thine answer within
From Thy Spirit I win ;
And when under its sway
Thy voiced will I obey
Then the rapture is given
Of hearing alway
Through the discord and din
Of the conflict of sin,
The great keynote of Heaven.

J. P. Ritchie.

Whence ? Why ? Whither ?

FROM whence have we come, from the Most or the
Least ?

From the dip of the Angel, the lift of the Beast ?

From the mould of God's image, or protoplast cell ?

From the freedom of Heaven, or the bondage of Hell ?

'Tis enough that we know

All the debt that we owe

To the Power that has made us so wond'rously well.

Why should Spirits of Evil be throned in high place ?

Why should Truth walk the earth as outcast in disgrace ?

Why Dives in purple of sumptuous state,

And Lazarus begging for bread at his gate ?

'Tis enough to rely

On the Voice from on high,

That Justice is guiding the flowings of Fate.

Oh, whither away do life's wanderings wend ?

To what final issue does Destiny tend ?

Where findeth the spirit the end of its quest,

When the life of the body sinks into its rest ?

'Tis enough to feel sure

That God's life must endure,

And that our life in His must for ever be blest.

J. P. Ritchie.

Christmas.

THE Holy Child,
So meek and mild,
Has come to reign
Within the sphere
Of our life here ;
In joy and pain,
In loss and gain,
Through hope and fear,
Through cloud and clear,
Through tempest's breath,
And shades of death,
 Bearing the palm
 Of victory's calm.

The Heralds of the Right
Have seen His day,
And strewed their vesture white
 Upon His way ;
The Morning Stars have sung
 His Natal lay ;
The Harps of God have rung
 The music of His sway ;
The Servants of the Night
 Have seen His star,
 And come from far
To hail the marvellous light ;
See them unfold
Their precious gifts of gold,
Their myrrh and frankincense,
With reverence intense,

J. P. Ritchie

And lay them at His feet,
In adoration sweet.
A glory from the skies
Bursts on the shepherds' eyes,
The music of the spheres
Sounds in their listening ears,
Taking them by surprise
To tell where Jesus lies.

Oh, Son of God, First-Born,
Thou hast in truth
The dew of endless youth
From the eternal morn ;
Thy lustrous eyes are blue,
Lenses which Heaven looks through.
Thy cheeks of rosy hue
Blush with the sacred wealth
Of God's own saving health ;
His glory veiled till now
Glows ever on thy brow.

And having seen Thy Day,
Shall we not more than they
Bow to Thy Sceptre's sway
And own Thy claim ;
Yielding thee homage true,
The glory that is due
Unto Thy Holy name ?

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The Beginning of Months.

OLD Year, to you
Adieu ! Adieu !
With us you can no longer stay ;
Your days are done,
Your course is run,
Into the past you step your way.

Yet you leave here,
Old Year ! Old Year !
Impress of all you've undergone ;
Our loss and gain,
Our joy and pain,
In Memory's records still live on.

As branch of tree,
The life to be,
Grows from the stem that holds it fast ;
Our present pays
For yesterdays,
Since God requires that which is past.

Oh ! New-born Year !
What Cheer ? What Cheer ?
In view of all our sin and shame—
Good gifts profaned,
The conscience stained,
Reproach cast on the Master's name.

Time's child new-born
This happy morn,
Let hope smile from your eyes of blue,
That God's good-will
Is sovereign still,
And working to make all things new.

Oh ! Will Divine,
Thy work be mine,
Then from all ill shall good proceed,
And failures past
Shall flower at last,
In fragrance of the perfect deed.

Oh ! Life Divine !
Thy way be mine !
Then nought I meet shall me dismay—
My sure defence
The evidence
Of light that grows to perfect day.

J. P. Ritchie.

THE END

